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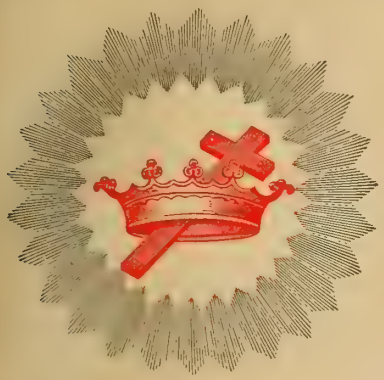
FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

CHRIST RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE TOMB

CHARMING BIBLE STORIES



WRITTEN IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE

AND EMBRACING THE

Whole Narrative of the Old and New Testaments

PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE

INSTRUCTION, ENTERTAINMENT AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF PERSONS OF ALL AGES, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR HOMES, SUNDAY SCHOOLS, SOCIETIES OF CHRISTIAN WORKERS, ETC., ETC.

CONTAINING ALSO

A Choice Collection of Religious Emblems

THE WHOLE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE

A Greater Interest in the Bible and a Better Understanding of its Sacred Teachings

BY

HENRY DAVENPORT NORTHROP, D.D.,

Author of "Story of the New World," "Golden Manual," etc.

PROFUSELY EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS

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PREFACE.

THE BEAUTIFUL STORIES of the Bible never lose their charm. They are always new, captivating and soul-stirring. The young read them with eager delight, yet no greater than that of the old. The great French writer, Victor Hugo, said the narratives of the Bible were for every mansion and cottage, and one of our greatest American statesmen said that unless the lessons they teach are learned by the masses of the people there is no future for the Nation.

The young are in the springtime of life, and it is easy to plant in their hearts the noblest truths and principles. They are the hope of our country, and our new and attractive work, CHARMING BIBLE STORIES, ought to be put into the hands of every one of them. It will be handled with ever-growing interest, read over and over again, and the thrilling truths and beautiful lessons it contains will never be forgotten.

This volume is very comprehensive, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation. The first pages are fragrant with Eden's floral bowers, and the last pages sparkle with the waters of the River of Life. The fascinating story of one event follows that of another until the whole Bible history is told in language choice and plain, and suited to every age.

Let the story of Joseph in Egypt be read by every fireside. He was truthful, diligent, noble, and he dared to do right. Everywhere the Bible Story teaches the weightiest lessons. Majestic Moses is seen as the great leader and lawgiver of the Hebrew nation. He is pictured in his little life boat, at the burning bush, and on stormy Sinai, "whose rolling thunders jar the world."

That great captain, Joshua, passes the River Jordan with his valiant host, and soon we hear the shout of victory. Gideon with his little army; Jephthah performing his rash vow; Samson vanquishing the lion and carrying the gates of Gaza; and Ruth gleaning in the fields of Boaz—the story of each is fully told. Then comes the charming account of the little boy Samuel who gave sign in childhood of what the man would be. The life of that strange monarch, King Saul, was full of startling incidents and ended in a tragedy. David, the Shepherd Boy, next appears upon the scene.

Solomon is depicted in his dazzling glory; the Temple rises in grandeur and beauty before our eyes, and then comes that strange man of the desert, the Prophet Elijah, who boldly rebuked public corruption. One after another the Hebrew Kings and the thrilling events associated with their names are fully described. Every reader is delighted with the graphic stories of the Jewish Captivity; of heroic Daniel in Babylon; of that young patriot, Nehemiah; of Queen Esther, saving her people.

How eagerly the world reads the Charming Story of Bethlehem—the story of the angelic choir; of the wondering shepherds who heard the heavenly anthem of Peace and Good-will; of the Holy Child laid in the humble manger; of the burning Star that lighted

the Wise Men of the East to the feet of the infant Prophet, Priest and King; and the thrilling incidents connected with His early life. As He grew up His hands were browned with honest toil, and He was a King without the crown or purple.

In simple yet vivid language the captivating story is continued, and the interest grows at every step as the striking scenes are unfolded—such as the Expulsion of the Money-Changers from the Temple; the beautiful discourse to the woman of Samaria; the delivery of the famous Sermon on the Mount, containing the grandest truths ever spoken; the stilling of the storm-tossed Sea of Galilee and the Rescue of Peter from a watery grave; the calling of the hardy fishermen to throw the Gospel Net and catch the kingdoms of the world; and those noble deeds of love and mercy that gave healing to the sick, sight to the blind, hope to the desponding and life to the dying.

How simple are the New Testament Parables, yet how sublime are their thoughts and beautiful their lessons. It has been well said that they are "Jewels in Words."

The Closing Scenes in the Life of Christ depict the most startling tragedy known in history. In graphic pen-pictures the scenes of the Crucifixion are portrayed, and these are followed by the rending of the tomb and the sublime ascension. It would not be possible for human pen to depict more vividly those majestic events, at once awful and fascinating, which form the closing part of Christ's life upon earth.

Then follows by a full account of the Lives of the Apostles. The graphic story embraces the brilliant career of the Apostle Paul, his stripes and persecutions; his perils and sufferings, his thrilling shipwreck and last days at Rome.

To these are added Sacred Allegories, by Rev. William Adams, who surpasses all other writers in teaching the most beautiful lessons under the captivating forms of parables and stories. This is a most delightful part of this very comprehensive volume.

The author of CHARMING BIBLE STORIES has followed closely the Bible narrative, using largely the exact language of the Holy Scriptures. In no instance has he departed from the meaning of the Sacred writers, yet making explanations in simple language wherever needed. The work will be found especially valuable to Parents and others desiring to instruct the young in the Truths of Religion.

Special attention is called to the Vast Gallery of Superb Illustrations which this great work contains. These are new, and are the masterpieces of the world's most famous artists. The Emblematic Engravings teach the most striking truths of the Bible in a manner not likely to be forgotten.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY OF THE CREATION.

PAGE

The Story of the Creation—What was Made on Each Day—Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden—The Serpent Beguiles Eve—Cherubim and a Flaming Sword—Cain Kills his Brother Abel—A Mark Set Upon Cain 17

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF THE FLOOD.

The Story of the Flood—The World Grown Very Wicked—Noah Commanded to Build an Ark for the Saving of His Family—Every Living Thing on the Dry Land Destroyed—Noah Leaves the Ark and Offers Sacrifice—The Tower of Babel—Confusion of Tongues and Scattering of the People 25

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM.

The Story of Abraham—Destruction of Sodom and Story of Lot—Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away—Abraham Offering up Isaac—Journey of Abraham's Servant—Isaac and Rebekah—Isaac Obtains a Wife from a far Country . . 33

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF ESAU AND JACOB.

The Story of Esau and Jacob—Birthright Sold for a Mess of Pottage—Two Kids from the Flock—Jacob Obtains the Blessing of Isaac—Dream of the Ladder and Angels—Jacob Visits Laban—Leah and Rachel—Serving Fourteen Years to Obtain Rachel for a Wife—Happy Meeting of Jacob and Esau 49

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

The Story of Joseph—A Boy in a Pit—Sold Away into Egypt—The Coat Dyed with Blood—Telling the Meaning of Dreams—

PAGE

Wearing the King's Ring—Famine in all Lands—Joseph's Brethren in Egypt—Jacob and Benjamin 59

CHAPTER VI.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN IN EGYPT.

Joseph and his Brethren in Egypt—The Feast in the Palace—Story of Benjamin—The Cup in the Sack—The Plea of Judah—Joseph Makes Himself Known to his Brethren—Jacob's Journey to Egypt—A Home in a Far Country—The Blessing of Joseph's Two Sons—Jacob's Death and Burial—Last Days of Joseph 72

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY OF MOSES.

The Story of Moses—The Little Lifeboat—Adopted Child of Pharoah's Daughter—Cruel Treatment of the Israelites in Egypt—Moses Slays an Egyptian—At the Burning Bush—Aaron's Rod Becomes a Serpent—The Ten Plagues—The First-born of the Egyptians Slain—Feast of the Passover—The Hebrews Pass Through the Red Sea—Pharaoh and his Host Drowned—The Song of Triumph . . . 85

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE RED SEA TO SINAI.

From the Red Sea to Sinai—The Bitter Waters Made Sweet—Bread from Heaven—A Flock of Quails—Water from the Rock in Horeb—Battle with the Amalekites—The Ten Commandments Spoken from Sinai—Story of the Tabernacle and its Services—The Scapegoat Sent into the Wilderness 101

CHAPTER IX.

WANDERINGS IN THE WILDERNESS.

The Golden Calf—Moses Angry and Breaks the Tables of the Law—The Glory of Mount

PAGE

Sinai—Numbering the People—The Pillar of Fire—The Israelites Murmur—Punishment by Fire—A Strong Wind Brings Quails for Food—Spies Sent to the Promised Land—The Brazen Serpent—Story of Balaam and Balak—Death of Moses—The People Mourn Thirty Days . 119

CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF JOSHUA.

Story of Joshua—Arrival of the Israelites at Jordan—Crossing the River—Rahab and the Spies—Capture of Jericho—Battle at the City of Ai—Achan Stoned for Theft—Men in Old Clothes—A Furious Hailstorm—Joshua's Great Victory—The People Choose Whom they will Serve 135

CHAPTER XI.

THE STORY OF GIDEON.

The King of Moab Slain—Deborah Judges the People—The Host of Sisera Scattered—Gideon and the Angel—Choosing an Army—Three Hundred Warriors—Trumpets and Pitchers—A Great Victory—Gideon's Wicked Son—Capture of a City—Abimelech Killed by a Young Man 152

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORY OF SAMSON.

Jephthah and his Daughter—An Angel Comes to Manoah—Birth of Samson—The Slain Lion—Honey from a Strange Source—A Hard Riddle to Guess—Jackals in the Corn—Samson Breaks his Bonds—The Giant Loses his Strength—The Cunning Trick of Delilah—Pillars of the Temple Fall—Death of Samson 166

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORY OF RUTH.

A Famine at Bethlehem—Naomi Returns from Moab—Ruth Cleaves to her Mother-in-law—Gleaners in the Harvest Field—Ruth at the Feet of Boaz—The Shoe Given to a Neighbor—Ruth Becomes the Wife of Boaz 174

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL.

The Story of Samuel—Hannah's Prayer—The Boy Hears a Voice Calling Him—Sudden Death of Eli—Trouble with the Philistines—The Ark Carried Away—A Great Victory—Samuel Sets up a Stone—The Israelites Want a King 181

CHAPTER XV.

THE STORY OF SAUL.

Story of Saul—A Vial of Oil—Saul is Made King—Israel's Army—War with Amalek—The King's Disobedience—The Torn Mantle—An Evil Spirit—The Shepherd Boy and his Harp—David is Pursued—Saul and the Witch of Endor—The Last Battle—Death of Saul—What Was Done with the King's Body . . . 191

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORY OF DAVID.

The Story of David—Anointed by the Prophet—The Sling that Slew a Giant—The Enemy Routed—Saul's Anger Against David—Jonathan's Friendship—The Wanderer—Saul Spared by David—Abigail Sends a Present and Becomes David's Wife—What Happened at Ziklag—Startling News from the Field of Battle 203

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REIGN OF DAVID.

The Reign of David—War with the Philistines—The Ark Brought to Jerusalem—David and Uriah—Nathan's Rebuke—Parable of the Ewe Lamb—The Dead Child—Rebellion of Absalom—David's Flight—A Great Battle—Death of Absalom—David's Grief—A Kiss and a Stab—Terrible Pestilence—David Yields his Throne to Solomon 221

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STORY OF SOLOMON.

The Story of Solomon—David's Choice of a King—The Anointing—Building the Temple—The Ark Placed in the Holy of Holies—The Dedication of the Lord's House—Solomon Punishes Wrong-Doers—Dispute About a Child—Visit from the Queen of Sheba—A Magnificent Throne—Horses and Chariots—Sin of Idolatry—Solomon's Proverbs—The Fool and Wise Man—The Virtuous Woman . 238

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STORY OF ELIJAH.

PAGE

The Story of Elijah—Fed by Ravens—The Widow's Cruse of Oil and Barrel of Meal—Story of the Dead Child—The Prophet on Carmel—Rain in Answer to Prayer—Under the Juniper Tree—Elijah on Mount Horeb—Naboth and his Vineyard—The Arrow that Smote Ahab—Ahaziah Comes to the Trone—Jehu Anointed King—Death of Jezebel—Elijah Taken up into Heaven 257

CHAPTER XX.

THE STORY OF ELISHA.

The Story of Elisha—Salt in the Water—War Against Moab—The Prophet's Chamber—The Woman of Shunem—Restoring a Dead Child—A Terrible Famine—Vessels of Oil—Iron Made to Swim—Story of Naaman—Sin of Gehazi—A Young Man's Vision—Stoning of the High-Priest—What Happened in Syria—Elisha's Last Words and Death—The Syrians Defeated—Parable of the Thistle and Cedar . 273

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO PROPHETS AND A KING.

Two Prophets and a King—Jonah Sent to Nineveh—A Prophet Cast into the Sea—The Great Fish—A Good King in Judah—The Temple Purified—A Royal Feast—The Sickness of Hezekiah—Babylon and Assyria—Message from the Assyrian King—Isaiah Gives Courage to the Jews—A Wonderful Vision . . . 287

CHAPTER XXII.

THE STORY OF DANIEL.

The Story of Daniel—Captivity of the Jews—Three Hebrew Youths—The King's Great Image—The Fiery Furnace—Handwriting on the Wall—Weighed and Found Wanting—Daniel's Enemies—In the Den of Lions—A Remarkable Vision 298

CHAPTER XXIII.

RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY.

Return from the Captivity—Rebuilding the Temple—King Darius—Ezra Arrives at Jerusalem—Too Much Wickedness—Wives Taken from the Heathen—Arrival of Nehemiah—

PAGE

The Walls Rebuilt—The Enemy Thwarted—Ezra Reads the Law—Story of Queen Esther—A Great Feast—Queen Vashti—The Jews in Danger—Haman's Wicked Plot—Esther Saves Her People—Haman Hanged 311

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STORY OF JOB.

The Story of Job—Sons, Daughters and Great Possessions—Satan Among the Sons of God—Messengers Bring Startling News—Job Afflicted with Boils—A Visit from Three Friends—Job's Grievous Complaint—Better Days at Last—Presents and Congratulations—Increase of Riches 331

CHAPTER XXV.

THE STORY OF BETHLEHEM.

The Story of Bethlehem—A Roman Emperor—Zacharias in the Temple—An Angel Brings a Message—Birth of John Foretold—An Angel Appears to Mary—Elisabeth Visits Her Cousin—The Child Named John—Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem—Birth of the Child Jesus—The Angels and Shepherds—Scene in the Temple—Happy Old Simeon—Good News for the World—The Anthem of Peace 339

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHAT FOLLOWED THE BAPTISM.

Story of John the Baptist—Jesus on the Banks of the Jordan—The Temptation in the Wilderness—The Fishermen Become Disciples—The Miracle in Cana of Galilee—Wine from Water—Jesus in Jerusalem—Buyers and Sellers Driven from the Temple—Words of Jesus not Understood—The Man Who Came by Night—Discourse to Nicodemus 357

CHAPTER XXVII.

JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE.

The People of Samaria—The Woman at Jacob's Well—The Water of Life—In the Synagogue at Nazareth—Hatred of the Jews—Healing the Son of a Nobleman—Casting Out a Devil—Wonderful Cures—Jesus Calls Peter and Andrew—Discourses Upon the Law and Providence—A Lesson from Birds and Flowers—House Built on the Rock—A Leper Healed—The Widow's Son Raised to Life 367

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING.

PAGE

Jesus Dines in the House of a Pharisee—Mary Magdalene and Her Box of Ointment—Cure of the Man Sick of the Palsy—A Cluster of Parables—What the Kingdom of Heaven is Like—Story of the Prodigal—Publicans and Sinners—A Woman Healed—The Daughter of Jairus—The Troubled Sea Calmed—The Man Possessed of Devils—Followed by a Multitude—The Twelve Apostles 381

CHAPTER XXIX.

MARVELLOUS WORKS AND WORDS.

The Man at the Pool of Bethesda—Trouble With the Pharisees—Plucking Corn on the Sabbath—David Eating the Shew-Bread—Death and Burial of John the Baptist—Feeding a Multitude—Storm on the Sea—Jesus Walking on the Water—Rescue of Peter—A Mother's Appeal for Her Daughter—The Deaf and Dumb Man—A Blind Man Healed—Peter Called a Rock—The Mount of Transfiguration—A Lunatic Cured 399

CHAPTER XXX.

LAST VISIT OF JESUS TO GALILEE.

Lesson from a Little Child—The Unjust Steward—Money Found in a Strange Place—Feast of Tabernacles—Pharisees Angry—The Man Blind From His Birth—Ten Lepers Healed—Jesus Blessing Little Children—The Good Samaritan—Jesus at Jerusalem and Bethany—The Raising of Lazarus—Two Blind Men Receive Their Sight 411

CHAPTER XXXI.

LAST DAYS IN THE TEMPLE.

Jesus at Bethany—Anointing in the House of Martha, Mary and Lazarus—Entry into Jerusalem—Road Strewn With Palm-Branches—Children in the Temple—The Man Who Had a Vineyard—Disputing With the Pharisees—The Tribute-Money—The Fate of Hypocrites—The Poor Widow—Vivid Picture of the Second Coming 433

CHAPTER XXXII.

JESUS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED.

PAGE

A Plot to Put Jesus to Death—Feast of the Passover—Preparations for the Last Supper—Jesus Washing the Feet of His Disciples—In the Garden of Gethsemane—A Prayer of Agony—The Traitor's Kiss—False Witnesses—Jesus Before the High-Priest—Denial of Peter—Sorrowful End of Judas—Jesus Before Pilate—A Furious Mob—The Purple Robe and Crown of Thorns 443

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE STORY OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

Story of the Crucifixion—Bearing the Cross—A Prayer for Enemies—The Earthquake and Darkening of the Sun—Veil of the Temple Rent—The Burial—The Angel and Women at the Tomb—Surprise of the Disciples—Jesus at Emmaus — Again in Galilee — The Great Draught of Fishes—Solemn Charge to Peter—Jesus at Bethany — The Ascension — Awe-Struck Disciples Appear in the Temple . . 456

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE STORY OF THE APOSTLES.

Casting Lots for Another Apostle—Choice of Matthias—Wonders on the Day of Pentecost—The Tongues of Fire—Peter's Remarkable Sermon—Thousands of Believers—The Lame Man Healed—Two Apostles in Prison—Story of Ananias and Sapphira — Prison Doors Thrown Open—Choosing Seven Deacons—Story of Stephen—The First Martyr—Simon the Sorcerer—Philip in Africa—A Man in a Chariot—A Queen's Treasurer Baptized . . 470

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE STORY OF SAUL.

The Story of Saul—The Bright Light from Heaven—A Persecutor Changed to an Apostle—Story of Barnabas—Jews Attempt to Kill Saul—Story of Peter and Dorcas—Peter on the Housetop—A Remarkable Vision—Simon the Tanner and Cornelius—Martyrdom of James—Peter's Escape from Prison—Herod's Speech—A Beautiful City—A Notorious Wizzard—The Apostles Suffer Persecution—Paul Stoned by a Mob—Success of the Gospel 484

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY.

Paul and Barnabas Separate—The Young Man Timothy—Paul and Silas at Philippi—The

PAGE

House of Lydia—Casting Out an Evil Spirit—Locked Up in the Old Prison—An Earthquake—The Jailor's Fright—Leaving Thessalonica by Night—At Berea—Arrival at Athens—Paul Preaching on Mars' Hill—The City of Corinth—Story of Gallio—A New Preacher From Egypt—Aquila and Priscilla—Apollos Preaching in Greece 501

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY.

Journey Through Little Asia—At Ephesus and Corinth—Wizzards and Deceivers—Diana's Gorgeous Temple—Wild Uproar at Ephesus—The Apostle Travels in Greece—Story of Eutychus—A Sad Parting—The Gospel at Tyre—Paul at Jerusalem—A Furious Mob—Paul Bound with Chains—Scene before the Council—An Infamous Plot—Paul Finds Friends in His Danger 514

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PAUL AT CÆSAREA AND ROME.

Paul Sent by Night to Cæsarea—The Roman Governor Felix—Wicked Drusilla—A New Governor—Paul Before King Agrippa—A Pointed Sermon—Two Years in Prison—Plot to Take the Life of Paul—The Voyage to Rome—Furious Storm—The Ship Wrecked—Escape of All on Board—A Deadly Viper—Astonishment of the Heathen—Miracles of Healing—Paul's Arrival at Rome—A Noble Martyr — The Apostle John — Wonderful Visions 529

SACRED ALLEGORIES.

PAGE

The King's Messengers 545
The Old Man's Home 582

List of Illustrations

PAGE

Frontispiece . . . . . .
Adam and Eve Driven Out of the Garden of Eden 19
Adam Tilling the Ground 20
Cain and Abel Making an Offering to the Lord 21
The Death of Abel 22
The Peaceable Fruits of the Spirit 23
Brotherly Love 24
Noah Building the Ark 26
Return of the Dove to the Ark 28
Noah and His Family Leaving the Ark . . . 29
Noah's Sacrifice After the Flood 30
The Builders of Babel Scattered 31
Abram Entering the Land of Canaan 34
The Egyptian King Taking the Wife of Abram 35
Melchizedek Blessing Abram 37
"As the Stars, so Shall be Thy Posterity" . . 38
The Destruction of Sodom Foretold to Abraham 40
Lot and His Family Fleeing From Sodom . . 41
Departure of Hagar and Ishmael 42
Abraham Offering Isaac 44
Abraham's Servant Meeting Rebekah 46
Isaac Welcoming Rebekah 47
Isaac Blessing Jacob 51
Jacob's Vision of Angels 52
Jacob Meeting Rebekah 54
Laban Hiring Jacob 55
Jacob Wrestling With the Angel 56
Meeting of Jacob and Esau 57
Joseph's Dream of the Sun, Moon and Eleven Stars 60
The Shepherd and His Flock 61
Joseph Sold by His Brethren 62
Joseph Interpreting Pharoah's Dreams . . . 66
Joseph Proclaimed Ruler of Egypt 68
The Cup Found in Benjamin's Sack 75
Joseph Makes Himself Known to His Brethren 77
The Sons of Jacob Burying Their Father . . 81
Embalming the Body of Joseph 83
Pharaoh's Daughter Finding Moses 86
Moses Brought Before Pharaoh's Daughter . . 87
The Israelites Made to Work Hard in Egypt . 88
Moses Slaying the Egyptian 89

PAGE

Moses at the Burning Bush 90
Aaron's Rod Changed to a Serpent 92
The Feast of the Passover 96
Departure of the Israelites From Egypt . . . 97
Pharaoh's Host Destroyed in the Red Sea . . 99
Moses Bringing Water From the Rock . . . 104
Aaron and Hur Holding Up the Hands of Moses 105
Moses Receiving the Tables of the Law . . . 107
The Setting Up of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness 109
Outside View of the Tabernacle 110
The Ark of the Covenant 111
Furniture of the Tabernacle 112
The Laver 113
Sending the Scapegoat Into the Wilderness . 114
The High Priest Offering Incense on the Golden Altar 115
The Way to the Promised Land 117
The Fountain in the Wilderness 118
The Israelites Worshipping the Golden Calf . 120
Moses Destroying the Tables of the Law . . . 121
Moses Bringing the New Tables of the Law . 122
The Spies Returning From Canaan 124
The High Priest in Full Dress 126
The Brazen Serpent 128
Balaam Met by the Angel of the Lord . . . 129
Balaam's Sacrifice on Seven Altars 130
Moses Rehearsing the Commandments to the Children of Israel 132
The Lord Appearing to Moses and Joshua in the Pillar of a Cloud 133
Moses Giving His Charge to Joshua 137
Rahab and the Spies 138
The Hebrews Crossing the Jordan 139
The Angel Appearing to Joshua 141
Falling of the Walls of Jericho 142
Joshua Capturing the City of Ai 143
The Inhabitants of Ai Witnessing the Defeat of Their Army 145
Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still . 147
Joshua Dividing the Land 149
Gideon's Offering Burnt by Fire from the Rock 156
Gideon's Victory Over the Midianites . . . 159
A Woman Casts a Stone Upon Abimelech . . 162

	PAGE
Abimelech Slain by His Armor-Bearer	164
Jephthah Meeting His Daughter	167
Samson Slaying the Lion	169
Samson Caught and Bound by His Foes	172
Ruth and Naomi	175
Ruth Gleaning in the Fields of Boaz	177
The Lord of Hosts	179
The Harvest Time	180
The Young Samuel Brought to Eli	182
Hannah Visiting Samuel	184
The Call of Samuel	186
The Destruction of the Hagarites	194
Saul Tearing the Robe of Samuel	196
David Playing the Harp Before Saul	197
Saul and His Men Searching for David	198
Saul and the Witch of Endor	200
Saul Kills Himself by Falling on His Sword	201
Samuel Anointing David at Bethlehem	204
David Slaying Goliath	206
Saul Casting the Javelin at David	208
The Covenant Between David and Jonathan	211
David Spares the Sleeping Saul	214
Abagail's Present to David	217
Peace and Joy	219
The Name of the Lord	220
David Anointed King Over Israel	222
David Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem With Great Rejoicing	224
David Mourning the Death of His Child	226
David Pardoning Absalom	228
Shimei Casting Stones at David	230
David Instructing Joab to Number the People	234
An Angel Goes Forth to Smite the Land	235
David Builds a New Altar	236
Solomon is Crowned King	240
The Judgment of Solomon	244
Husbandmen of Ancient Palestine Going Forth to Work	245
The Ark Brought Into the Temple by Solomon	247
Solomon Dedicating the Temple	248
The Ark and Furniture of the Temple	250
The Queen of Sheba Visiting Solomon	251
Kings Bringing Gifts to Solomon	253
Solomon's Picture of the Fool and the Wise Man	254
The Virtuous Woman	255
Elijah Fed by Ravens	258
Elijah Raising the Widow's Son	260
Elijah Slaying the Prophets of Baal	262
Elijah at the Mouth of the Cave	263
The Death of King Ahab	265
The Body of Jezebel Eaten by Dogs	267
Elijah Taken Up into Heaven	269
Thanksgiving unto the Lord	271
The Path of Wisdom	272
Elisha Causing Iron to Swim	277
Naaman at the Door of Elisha	279
The Stoning of Zechariah	281
Defeat of the Syrians by the Israelites	283
Cleansed from Unrighteousness	285
The Sun and Shield	286
Jonah Sheltered by the Vine	289
The Molten Sea	290
Hezekiah Cleansing the Temple	291
The Lips of Isaiah Touched with a Coal from the Altar	293
The Vision of Isaiah	296
The Jews Led into Captivity	299
Daniel Refusing to Worship the Image	302
Daniel Interpreting the King's Dream	304
Daniel Touched by the Angel	306
Thorns in the Field of the Slothful	309
Summer and Winter Shall Not Cease	310
The Return of the Jews from Captivity	312
Building a New Temple	314
Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem	318
Nehemiah and His Workmen	320
Two Pages of an Ancient Scroll of Scriptures	322
Queen Esther Crowned	324
The Treasures of Winter	329
"Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace"	330
The Messengers Telling Job of His Losses	332
Job and His Three Friends	334
Job Visited by His Relatives	335
Christmas Carols	337
The Joys that are Unseen	338
The Angel Appearing to Mary	341
Zacharias Writing a Name for the Child	343
Simeon Taking the Child in His Arms	347
Wise Men of the East Presenting Their Gifts	349
Killing the Male Children Under Two Years Old	350
Jesus Working at the Trade of a Carpenter	353
The Sure and Steadfast Anchor	355
Beautiful Garments	356
The Temptation on the Mountain	359
The Water Turned into Wine at Cana of Galilee	361
The Money-Changers Driven From the Temple	363
Christ Talking to Nicodemus	365
Jesus and the Woman of Samaria	368
"Follow Me and I Will Make You Fishers of Men"	374
Fall of the House Built on the Sand	378
Mary Anointing the Feet of Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee	382
The Enemy Sowing Tares by Night	385
Finding the Hidden Treasure	386
The Return of the Prodigal Son	388
The Beggar Lazarus at the Rich Man's Gate	389

	PAGE
Christ Raising the Daughter of Jairus	393
Good Trees Bring Forth Good Fruit	397
Joy After a Night of Weeping	398
The Burial of John the Baptist	402
Christ Feeding the Multitude	404
The Transfiguration	409
Jesus Teaching Humility by a Little Child	412
"Whereas I Was Blind, Now I See"	415
Jesus Blessing Little Children	419
Robbers Lying in Wait	421
The Priest and Levite Passing by the Wounded Man	422
The Good Samaritan	423
The Good Shepherd Dividing the Sheep from the Goats	425
The Raising of Lazarus	428
"Suffer Them to Come unto Me"	431
The Bread That Cometh Down from Heaven	432
Mary of Bethany Anointing the Feet of Jesus	434
Christ's Entry into Jerusalem	436
The Children in the Temple	438
Jesus Washing the Feet of His Disciples	445
Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane	447
Judas Betraying Jesus With a Kiss	449
Peter Denying Christ	452
They Cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"	454
Christ Sinking under His Cross on the Way to Golgotha	457
Simon Compelled to Help Jesus Bear the Cross	458
The Crucifixion of Christ	459
The Burial of Christ	461
The Angel and Women at the Empty Tomb	463
Jesus Convincing Thomas of His Resurrection	466
The Ascension of Christ	468
Tongues of Fire Resting on the Disciples	472
Peter Healing the Lame Man at the Gate of the Temple	474
Stephen Stoned to Death by His Enemies	480
The Sanhedrim in Session	483
Saul Struck to the Earth on His Way to Damascus	485
Peter's Vision on the Housetop	491
Peter Delivered from Prison by an Angel	493
Antioch	500
Ancient Ships	507
Paul Preaching on Mars' Hill	509
Hall of Pillars—Ruins of Karnak, Egypt	512
Demetrius Raising an Uproar at Ephesus Against Paul	518
Paul Bound With Chains	523
Paul Conveyed into the Castle	525
The Solitary Places Made Glad	527
The Glory of the New Jerusalem	528
The Strong Supporting the Weak	532
The First Christians at Rome Reading Paul's Letter	534
The Shipwreck of St. Paul	540
St. Paul's Arrival at Rome in Chains	542
A Bulky Pile, and yet of What Avail?	
One Book of Greater Worth Brings Down the Scale	547
Loudly the Lean and Hungry Poor Complain, Yet to the Miser they Appeal in Vain	551
Faith, Hope and Charity, of Heavenly Birth, Bestow the Richest Blessings Known to Earth	559
Not for a Crown will this Poor Wordling Pause, But Wastes His Life in Gathering Sticks and Straws	563
Pride Decks Itself, but Soon the Charms are Past, And to a Skeleton it Comes at Last	567
One Bears the Cross, the Other Lays it Down—Which of the Twain will Win the Golden Crown?	571
Who Carry Luggage will be Sure to Find That in the Race They're Sadly Left Behind	575
Fall Back, Thou Mighty Foe, and Bite the Dust, Slain by the Spirit's Sharp and Deadly Thrust	579
Vain Efforts Theirs Who Try to Overtake The Bubbles Which, if Caught, Would Break	583
Presumption Often Ventures Quite too Near, Where Danger Should Awaken Wholesome Fear	586
Base Error Shrinks and Trembles with Affright, When Truth Descends, Arrayed in Heavenly Light	590
Vain Task to Merely Clip the Outer Shoots; Let the Huge Trunk be Severed from the Roots	595
The Slave of Habit Breaks His Galling Chains, And Through All-Conquering Grace His Freedom Gains	601
Fresh Flowers Bloom and Limpid Fountains Play To Cheer the Travellers on Their Upward Way	605

Full Page Phototype Engravings.

Abraham's Servant Meeting Rebekah at the Well.
Abraham Offering Isaac.
Joseph Proclaimed Ruler of Egypt.
Joseph Making Himself Known to His Brethren.
The Finding of Moses by Pharoah's Daughter.
The Israelites at Mount Sinai.
Jewish Maidens Mourning with Jephthah's Daughter.
Elijah Fed by Ravens at the Brook Cherith.
Elisha Witnessing the Translation of Elijah.
The Messengers Telling Job of His Losses.
The Angels Appearing to the Shepherds.
The Wise Men Presenting Their Gifts.
From Earth to Heaven.
The Good Shepherd.
Christ Raising Lazarus From the Tomb.
The Angel and Women at the Sepulchre.

CHARMING BIBLE STORIES

CHAPTER I.

B. C. 4004.

THE STORY OF THE CREATION—WHAT WAS MADE ON EACH DAY—ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN—THE SERPENT BEGUILES EVE—CHERUBIM AND A FLAMING SWORD—CAIN KILLS HIS BROTHER ABEL—A MARK SET UPON CAIN.

LONG time ago there was no living thing on the earth. No grass, flowers, shrubs nor trees grew as they do now, and there were no insects, fishes, birds or beasts of any kind. There were no men, women or children, and no houses, villages or cities such as we see now. There was darkness everywhere.

Then God said, Let there be light, and there was light. He saw that the light was good, and he divided the light from the darkness. The light he called Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

On the second day God made the firmament, or the sky, and called it Heaven. Under this sky there was only water, covering all the earth; there were no fields, valleys or mountains, nothing but a great ocean.

On the third day God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called Seas. Then he made grass, herbs and trees to grow out of the land. The earth was now becoming very beautiful, and was fast getting ready for the living creatures that were to dwell in it. Grass, trees and flowers covered all the dry land, and the herb, bearing seed, and fruit-trees with fruit upon them had begun to grow. It was a strange, silent world yet. No voice of any animal was heard in it, no singing of birds or humming of insects, no sound of any living thing, only the waving and rustling of the beautiful trees, and the noise of streams, waterfalls, and the waves breaking on the shore.

On the fourth day God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. So now there were the sun by day and the moon and the stars by night

shining down out of the sky upon this beautiful, green, silent world.

On the fifth day God made fishes and all creatures that live in the water; and he made birds to fly in the air; so that the earth was no longer without living things in it. When he had made them, he blessed them, so that there should be a great many of them, and that all the sea should be filled with living things, as it is to-day, and that there should be birds flying everywhere over the earth.

On the sixth day God made all sorts of beasts and cattle, great and small, and insects, and everything that lives on the land, except birds, which had been made on the fifth day.

Man and Woman Made.

Afterwards, on this sixth day, when all these living things had been made on the earth, when birds were flying in the air and fishes were swimming in the sea, when green grass and herbs were growing, and flowers were blooming, and fruit-trees were laden with their fruit, and all things were ready for people to live and be happy here, then God made the first man and the first woman on the earth.

God made man in his own image, after his own likeness. He formed him of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. God put the man that he had made into a garden where there grew every tree that is pleasant to the eye and good for food. And he called the man Adam.

Then God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help-meet for him. So all the birds and beasts and living things that had been made were brought to Adam that he might give them names; but among them all there was no one that could be a companion to him—nothing that could speak to him, or help him in anything he wanted to do.

Then the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Then God blessed them, and told them that they and their children were to fill the earth with people, and that they were the masters and owners of everything on the earth.

All the other things that God had made he gave to the man and woman to be theirs. He said to them, Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. God gave them the herb bearing seed and every kind of fruit for their food. To the animals he gave the grass and green herbs for their food.

God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished. When the seventh day came, God made no more new things. He rested from his work; and he blessed the seventh day, and called it holy.

The Garden of Eden.

To Adam and his wife was given all this beautiful new world where everything was very good. They lived in a garden called Eden, which was the most beautiful part of it all. In this garden God had made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the eye and good for food; and there was a river flowing through it to give them water. Adam was put into this garden to dress it and to keep it; and he had his wife to help him. There they were glad and happy all

the time, for they were good, and did not know anything about being evil.

God gave them one command. He told them there was one tree in the garden that they must never eat the fruit of. Every other tree they might eat the fruit of whenever they chose; but if they ate of that tree, they should surely die. This tree was

spoke to the woman. He looked like a serpent, and said to the woman, Has God indeed said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden? The woman answered and said, We may eat of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

in the midst of the garden, and it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That meant that if Adam and his wife ate the fruit of it they would then not only know how to do evil things, but they would often wish to do them.

Now Adam and his wife had an enemy. Same hated them. One day he came and

Then the serpent said, Ye shall not surely die. He told the woman that the fruit of that tree would make them wise, and that God did not want them to be wise. The woman was persuaded. She took some of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and ate it; and then she gave some to Adam, and he also ate it.

When they had eaten it they were no longer good and pure; they had disobeyed God, and knew now all about sin and wickedness. They did not want to meet God now; they were afraid. When they heard his voice in the garden they tried to hide themselves. But they could not hide from God. God called to Adam, and said to him, Where art thou? And Adam said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Then God said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? The man answered and said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that thou hast done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I did eat.

God then spoke to the serpent, and said that he was cursed for what he had done; that he should creep along the ground in the dust always; and that there should be hatred between Satan and the people in the world. Satan should always hate them and try to do them harm; but that some day One should come into the world to overcome Satan. Then God said to the woman, that she must in future have a great deal of sorrow and pain. Her sin would be punished, and her life would be made unhappy because she did not obey God.

ADAM TILLING THE GROUND.

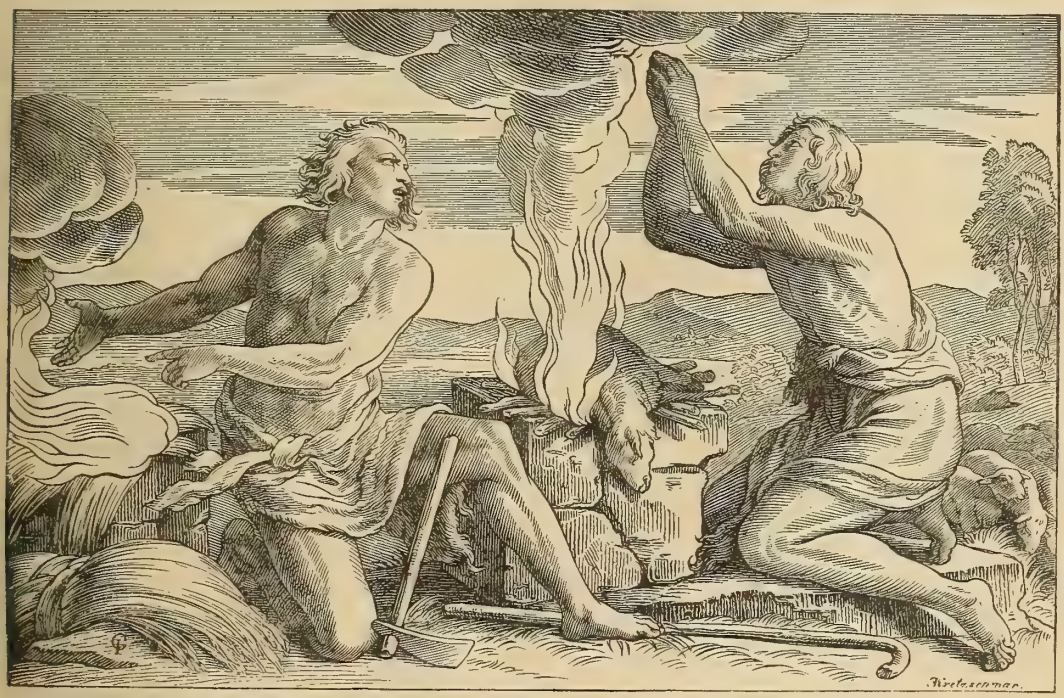
And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,

and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Death had now come into the world.

him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The Two Brothers.

After they left the garden, Adam and Eve had two sons: the eldest was called Cain, and was a tiller of the ground; but the



CAIN AND ABEL MAKING AN OFFERING TO THE LORD.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent

younger was called Abel, and was a keeper of sheep. Now both brothers made offerings to the Lord: Cain offered of the fruits of the field and Abel of the firstlings of his flock. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and his offering, he had not respect. At this Cain became very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou

doest well shalt thou not also receive a reward?

But if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.

And Cain talked with Abel, his brother; and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not, am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done; the voice of thy brother's blood

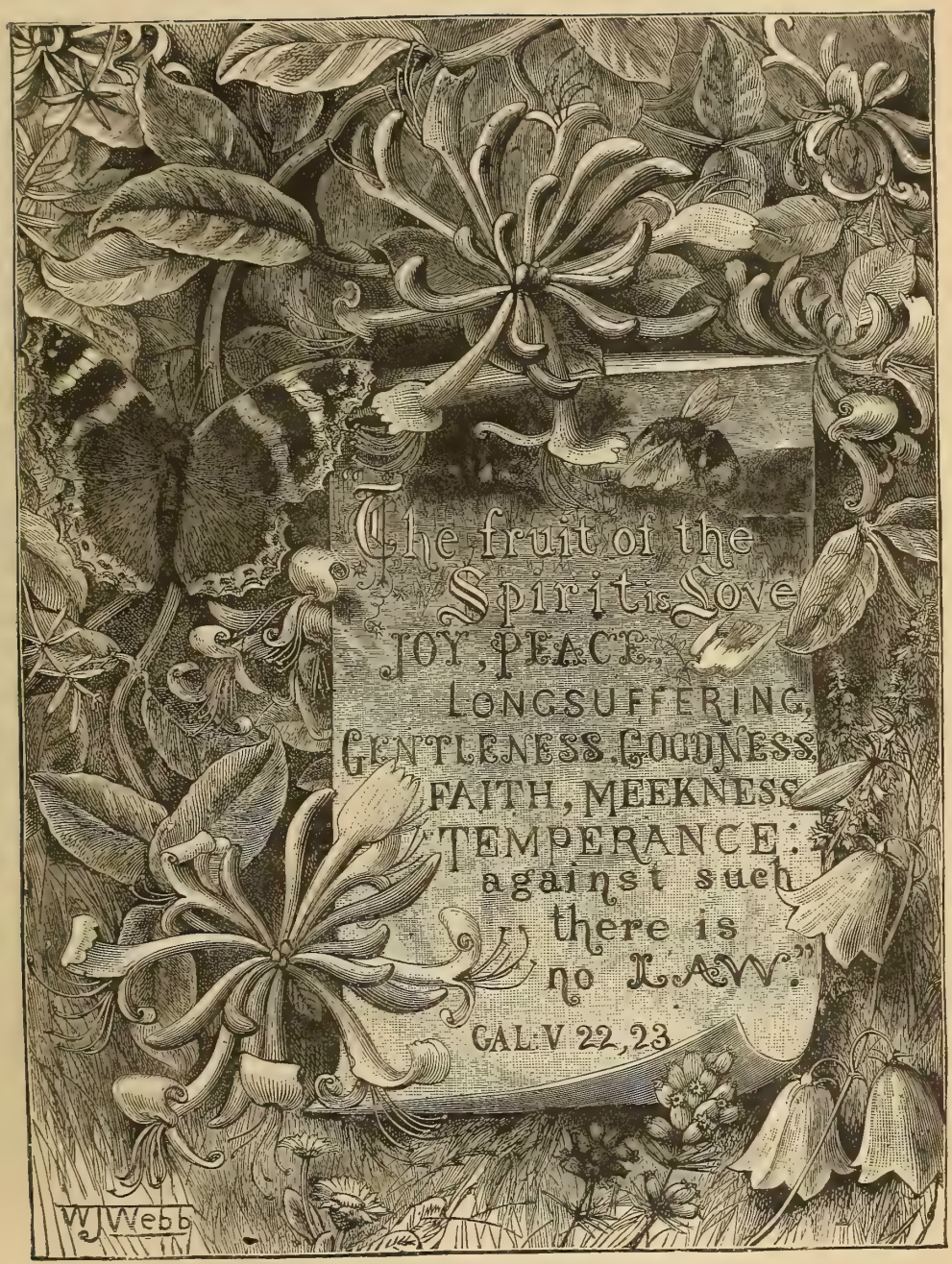
THE DEATH OF ABEL

crieth unto me from the ground? Cursed art thou from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its fruit. A fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth; and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

And the Lord said unto him, No, it shall not be so. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him, should kill him. So Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain became the father of a numerous family who, like him, did not fear the Lord; and he builded a city, and called it after the name of his eldest son, Enoch. This was the first city ever built.

And God gave to the first parents another son, and Eve called his name Seth, for God, said she, hath appointed me another son, instead of Abel whom Cain slew. And to Seth also was there born a son, and he called his name Enos. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.

And God gave Adam many sons and daughters, and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years. One of his descendants was Enoch who lived sixty and five years, when Methuselah was born to him. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty and five years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years when he died. His son Lamech lived seven hundred and seven years, and he called his son Noah, saying, The same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. And the sons of Noah were Shem, Ham and Japheth. Men now began to multiply fast upon the face of the earth.



THE PEACEABLE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

CHAPTER II.

B. C. 2347.

THE STORY OF THE FLOOD—THE WORLD GROWN VERY WICKED—NOAH COMMANDED TO BUILD AN ARK FOR THE SAVING OF HIS FAMILY—EVERY LIVING THING ON THE DRY LAND DESTROYED—NOAH LEAVES THE ARK AND OFFERS SACRIFICE—THE TOWER OF BABEL—CONFUSION OF TONGUES AND SCATTERING OF THE PEOPLE.

GREAT many years passed away, and by this time there was a multitude of people in the world. They had become very wicked, and were all the time growing more so. And God looked upon the earth, and he saw that the wickedness of man was very great, and that the thoughts of his heart were only evil. He was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for I am sorry that I made them.

There was only one man amongst them all at this time who pleased God, and his name was Noah. He found grace, or favor, in the eyes of the Lord; for he was a good man, and would have nothing to do with the sinful deeds of all the people who were living in those days. He walked with God, and he had brought up his children wisely and well.

So God spoke to Noah, and told him what he was going to do. He said, Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy by drowning everything that breathes; and everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will take care of you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives.

Noah Builds the Ark.

Then he told Noah to make a very large boat, or ship, called an "ark," which should float upon the water when God should send down his great rain upon the earth. And into this ark of wood Noah and his family were to go, with two of every sort of living creature—fowls, and cattle, and creeping things—that they might be kept alive. And abundance of food was to be put into the ark for them all. Noah believed everything that God had said to him, and he began at once to make the ark, as he had been told. He and his sons cut down a great many large trees, and then he got carpenters to help him to saw them into planks or boards, and to fasten them together.

And all the time the ark was being made (for it took a great many years to build) Noah preached to the people, and warned them. He told them that God was going

to drown the world for their wickedness; but they did not believe what he said. They went on eating and drinking and pleasing themselves, and doing everything just as usual. Noah told them that they were in danger, but they only laughed at him. And so year after year passed away.

and curiously-built house in the open fields. There was no sign of any flood yet; the sun rose every morning and set every evening, and the people went on just in their old ways, not believing that any change was coming. Then the Lord said to Noah, Come into the ark, you and all your family;

NOAH BUILDING THE ARK.

Noah still worked hard at the ark, which was to save him and his family from the great flood of waters, and he still went on preaching and warning his neighbors.

At last the great ark, which had taken a hundred and twenty years to make, was quite finished, and was looking like a huge

for you have walked uprightly before me in the midst of a wicked people. And take with you two and two of every beast, and bird, and creeping thing. For in seven days I will cause it to rain upon the earth; the rain shall last for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made

I will destroy from off the face of the earth.

Noah went into the ark with his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives. And God made to follow him into that place of safety two and two of every sort of living creature that was upon the earth. After that, God himself shut the door. God still waited seven days, as he had said, to give them time to repent; for he is slow to anger, and he does not like to be obliged to punish. But they took no heed; these last seven days were spent just like all the rest, and at last came the time for the flood.

A Forty Days' Rain.

Then the rain came down—such rain as has never been seen upon the earth, either before or since. It poured down night and day, for forty days, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the rivers and streams overflowed their banks. God, who had said to the sea, So far shalt thou go, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, now commanded the sea to spread over the earth again, to help in the work of destruction. The water came rushing into the houses, and the frightened people fled to the upper rooms. But there was no escape; the waters mounted higher and higher, and the upper rooms were soon reached and flooded, and all who were in them were drowned. Some climbed up into high trees; but before long the top branches were reached, and those who were clinging there, drenched with rain and sick with fear, were swept away into the flood. Some, no doubt, tried to escape in boats; but that tremendous rain and the rushing flood quickly overturned them, and the despairing people sank in the deep water.

And so the flood prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, till at last all the high hills were completely covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing; and every man, and every woman, and every child. All, all were drowned.

Eight Persons Saved.

But where was Noah? Safe in the ark As the flood rose, so the ark rose too, floating securely upon that great mass of waters. Just eight persons were saved, and no more; there were only eight among all the people on the earth who believed that God would do as he had said.

And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God made the rain to cease, and he caused a wind to pass over the earth, to help to dry up the waters. Every day the water became less and less, but it was a long time yet before the earth was dry. When half a year had passed away, the ark rested on the top of a high mountain called Ararat; and little by little the waters sank lower and lower, till at last all the tops of the mountains were seen.

Noah wanted very much to know if the earth was getting dry again; for though there was a window in the ark, it was so placed that he could not see anything out of it except the sky. He could open it, however; and so one day he took a raven and let it out through the window. But the raven did not come back; it flew backwards and forwards over the water, and rested on the top of the ark, but it would not go into it again. Then Noah sent out a dove, which is a very gentle bird—very different to the wild and fierce raven. But the dove found no tree upon which she could perch, and no place where she could rest, so she flew back to the ark. And Noah was

watching for her, and when he saw her come back, he put out his hand and took her

RETURN OF THE DOVE TO THE ARK.

gently in through the window. After this Noah waited one week, and then he sent out the dove again. The gentle bird did not

come back quite so soon this time. She remained away till the evening; and when she returned to the ark, what do you think she had in her beak? An olive leaf that she had plucked off a tree. Noah was

pleased to see it, for he knew by this that the flood of waters had almost gone. Yet again Noah waited a week; and once more he sent out his little dove. But she never came back again.

Then Noah took off the covering of the ark and looked out; and, behold, the ground was dry. How he must have longed to go out, and to walk about again on the fresh and beautiful earth. But much as he longed to do so, he did not attempt to leave the ark till God should tell him he might. God himself had shut the door, and Noah would not open it without his leave. So he waited patiently there eight weeks longer, till at last the joyful order came. God said to Noah, Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you. And bring out with you every living thing that is with you in the ark—birds, and cattle, and every creeping thing.

How glad they must all have been to tread on the soft green grass again, after having been shut up in the ark for a whole year. It was like a new world now. But what a solemn thought it was, that since Noah had last put his foot upon the ground, every soul except himself and his family had been drowned in that flood of waters. All his acquaintances and his neighbors were dead. As Noah thought of all this he felt thankful to God for his great deliverance. He builded an altar—that is, he made a heap of stones—and upon this heap, or altar, he offered a sacrifice to the Lord.

And God was pleased; and he blessed Noah and his sons, as he had blessed Adam and Eve in the beginning. And he told Noah that he should be master over all the beasts, and over every living thing upon the earth. Also, he now gave him permission for the first time to eat flesh. He said, Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

Afterwards God made a very gracious promise to Noah and to his sons. He said to them, I will never again destroy the earth by a flood of waters; but as long as the world lasts, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. And I will give you a sign that I will remember my promise. I do put my bow in the cloud, and when I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And you shall look at it, and I will look at it and remember the promise I have made you.

NOAH AND HIS FAMILY LEAVING THE ARK

In those days people lived a great deal longer than they do now. Noah was six hundred years old at the time of the flood, and he was nine hundred and fifty when he

died. The sons of Noah who went forth out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth.

When Noah and his three sons, with their wives, had come out of the ark, they had again to begin and dig the ground, and to take care of the sheep and cattle, as they had done before. The ground that had been cursed because of Adam's sin still brought forth briers and thistles; and though the earth was once again so fresh and beautiful, Noah and his sons had to work hard for their daily food. Noah was a husbandman or farmer. He dug the ground, and sowed corn, and gathered in the grain at the time of harvest. One day Noah spoke to his three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and told to them what should happen to their children's children in the far-off time in the future. He blessed Shem, and he blessed Japheth, and he told them that they should both be prosperous and great nations; but he cursed Ham for his sin, and said that his family should not be great, but should be mean and despised, and that he should be "a servant of servants."

NOAH'S SACRIFICE AFTER THE FLOOD.

At first the children of Ham, like the children of wicked Cain, seemed to prosper. One of his family was called Nimrod, and he became a very great man. He was a great hunter and a great builder, and he made

himself a kind of king. He built a great many cities, and he ruled over them. Then there was Canaan, another of Ham's family. He had a number of children, and they were very rich, and their country was very pleasantly situated; but yet, like all the descendants of Ham, they were wicked. God's curse was upon them, and they did not prosper in the end.

The country where Canaan had settled down was called after his name—the land of Canaan; and by-and-by you will hear how God took away that beautiful land from the wicked children of Ham, and gave it to some of the family of Shem.

A High Tower.

The world soon began to be filled with people again after the flood, and everybody spoke the same language. Now, as you know, a great many different languages are spoken, and the people of one country cannot understand the people of another country, unless they have first, with much trouble and difficulty, learned to speak in the same language. But at the time of which I am telling you all spoke alike. As men began to increase in number, so they began to get careless and wicked again. They seemed quickly to forget God, and only cared to follow their own sinful inclinations.

At first the people stayed near where the ark had rested, but as their families grew up, and more and more children were born, some of them began to journey further on till they came to a plain, or flat country, called the land of Shinar; and there they lived. After a time they said to one another, Let us build a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make a name for ourselves, so that we may not be scattered abroad, or separated from each other. This they agreed to do. But there was no stone in that part of the country, so they were obliged to make bricks for building the city and the tower.

When they said that they would build a tower which should reach to heaven, they they did not mean that it was possible it should reach to the place that we mean by heaven—where God lives; they only intended it to be so very high that it would look as if it reached to the skies. Perhaps they thought, too, that this tower would be a place of safety for them if another flood were to come upon the earth.

THE BUILDERS OF BABEL SCATTERED.

The plain of Shinar was a very busy place now. The people worked hard at their brick-making, and at their building; and all the time they were thinking what a grand place of safety it would be. And all the

time God was watching them; and at last he came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men were building. God not only looked at the city and the tower, but he looked into the people's hearts, and he saw how much sin and pride and disobedience there was there. So he would not let them finish their work.

The Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and now that they have begun to do this, they will stop at nothing, but will do whatever they have set their minds upon. Let us make them all speak a different language, that they may not understand each other any more.

And God did so. The people were busy at work, as usual, one giving orders here, another arranging things there—here some were asking what they should do next, and there some were explaining how things were to be done—when, all at once, they found that they could not understand each other. They had never heard any language but their own before, and now every one was speaking what appeared to be nonsense to the others. They at once left off building; for how could the workmen understand what the master was telling them to do? And how could the builder explain his orders to the masons, when he was speaking in a language they had never heard before?

There was great confusion in the land of Shinar that day, and great astonishment. Their plans were all upset, they could not make each other understand, and there was so much confusion, disorder, and worry, that they called the name of the tower Babel, which means "confusion."

And now the people began to separate from each other, and to spread themselves over the country. They wanted to keep together, but God scattered them. When their language was confounded, they did not wish to remain with those whom they could not understand. Some took their families and went in one direction, and some went in another direction, till they were all scattered. And thus it came to pass that the city and the high tower, which they thought would make them a name and make them famous, remained unfinished.

The people had been living without God, and had been working against God; so he rose up to stop them, and to bring their work to nothing.

Some of the families stayed quite near Babel, and others wandered farther off and settled by the sea. Afterward some of the children of these families wandered into new lands and went everywhere.

CHAPTER III.

B. C. 1996.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM—DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND STORY OF LOT—HAGAR AND ISHMAEL SENT AWAY—ABRAHAM OFFERING UP ISAAC—JOURNEY OF ABRAHAM'S SERVANT—ISAAC AND REBEKAH—ISAAC OBTAINS A WIFE FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

IN Ur of the Chaldees lived a man whose name was Terah. This Terah had three sons, namely, Haran, Nahor, and Abram. Now Haran and Nahor worshipped idols, of which the moon-god was the chief. So did also all the people of the land; but Abram knew the true God, and worshipped him only.

Haran, son of Terah, had a son, Lot by name, and two daughters, Milcah and Iscah or Sarai; and Milcah became the wife of Nahor, and Sarai the wife of Abram. After a while God appeared to Abram, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and go into the land that I shall show thee. Then Terah departed from Ur of the Chaldees, taking with him Abram, and Sarai his wife, and Lot his grandson, and all that he had. Westward he travelled till he came to Haran. Because the land was rich and fertile, and good for the feeding of flocks and herds, and because he himself also was now old and feeble, Terah would go no farther. So he abode in Haran, and Abram and Lot with him, till the day of his death. Two hundred and five years old was he when he died.

When Terah was dead, God spake again to Abram, saying, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram rose, and took with him Lot, his brother's son, and their two households, and all their sheep and oxen—many thousands in all—and went into the land of Canaan.

Where Abram Pitched his Tent.

And having come thither he pitched his tent for the first time in Sichem, in the oak-grove which was called the oak-grove of Moreh. While he sojourned at Moreh the Lord appeared unto him, and said, This is the land which I promised to give to thee, and to thy children after thee. Then Abram built an altar and offered sacrifices unto the Lord. From Moreh he went to Luz—there also he built an altar—and from Luz he journeyed into the south country. But while he dwelt there, there was a grievous famine in the land, and he was constrained to go down into Egypt.

Now as Abram came near to the borders of Egypt, he began to fear for his life. Sarai his wife was a very fair woman, and he

thought to himself, The Egyptians will kill me that they may take my wife. So he said to Sarai, Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister; so wilt thou save my life. And Sarai consented; for they had agreed between them at the first when they set out on their wanderings that at every place whither they should come she should say of him, He is my brother.

When they came to the borders of Egypt the officers that had the charge of these matters, sent to tell the king that a stranger had come from the north country, and that he had brought with him an exceedingly fair woman, who was, he said, his sister. So Sarai was taken into the house of Pharoah, the king of Egypt, that she might be added to the number of his wives. And Pharaoh gave many gifts to Abram—men-servants and maid servants, and camels and asses, and oxen and sheep.

But the Lord sent sickness into Pharaoh's house, and his wise men told him that it had been sent on account of the stranger woman whom he had taken into his house. Therefore he sent for Abram, and said to him, What is this thou hast done? Why didst thou not tell me that this woman was thy wife? Why didst thou say that she was thy sister? I might have taken her to be my wife; take now therefore thy wife, and go thy way.

So Pharaoh sent Abram away. But he took not away from him the gifts that he had given him, nor aught that he had. Also he gave his officers a charge concerning him that he should suffer no harm, but should depart from the land in safety and peace. So Abram went back to the land of Canaan—for the famine had ceased—and pitched his tent again at Luz. Now the land had already many inhabitants. And because Abram and Lot had many flocks and herds there was not room enough for the two. When therefore there arose strife between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot, because the pasture was not sufficient for both, Abram said to Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are brethren. The whole land is before thee. Choose what thou wilt for thyself. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right. If thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

ABRAM ENTERING THE LAND OF CANAAN.

Then Lot looked out from Bethel and saw the country. When he looked to the north and to the south and to the west, all seemed barren. But eastward he looked on the plain of Jordan, and saw that it was green and well watered, even as a garden of the Lord. So Lot chose for himself the

plain of Jordan. And he separated himself from Abram, and journeyed to Sodom.

walls. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

THE EGYPTIAN KING TAKING THE WIFE OF ABRAM.

First he pitched his tent outside the city, but afterwards he took up his abode within the

After Lot had departed, the Lord appeared again to Abram, and said, Lift up now thine

eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and westward and eastward. For all the land which thou seest I will give to thee, and to thy children for ever. And I will make thy posterity as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy posterity also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee

A Tent Under a Tree.

After this Abram removed his tent, and travelled to the place that was called Hebron, There he pitched his tent under the oak-tree of Mamre. This Mamre was a great chief among the Amorites.

While he dwelt under the oak tree of Mamre, there came war in the east country; And the cause of the war was this: While Abram still dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, the king of Elam, and other kings of the east with him, had conquered the five cities of the plain of Jordan, and had laid a tribute upon them. But now the five cities rebelled, and refused to pay their tribute. Twelve years they had served, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled, and in the fourteenth year the king of Elam came up against them, having with him the two kings of Babylonia, and the king of the land of Assyria.

First these four kings smote the tribes that dwelt in Haran, and in the land that lies between Arnon and the brook Jabbok, and in the land of Moab. Also they smote the tribes that dwelt in the caves of Mount Hor, and the Amalekites and the Amorites that dwelt eastward of Jordan, and so came at last to the Cities of the Plain.

Then the kings of the five cities gathered together their army and went out to meet the armies of the east. In the valley of Siddim they met them. The valley was full of pits, and the five kings hoped that the chariots and horsemen of the eastern army would be ensnared amongst them. But the battle went against the five kings, and many of their people were slain, they that were left escaping to the mountains of Moab. Then the king of Elam and his allies spoiled the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, taking away all their possessions and all their food, and so departed. And they took Lot, that was Abram's nephew, and all his goods with them.

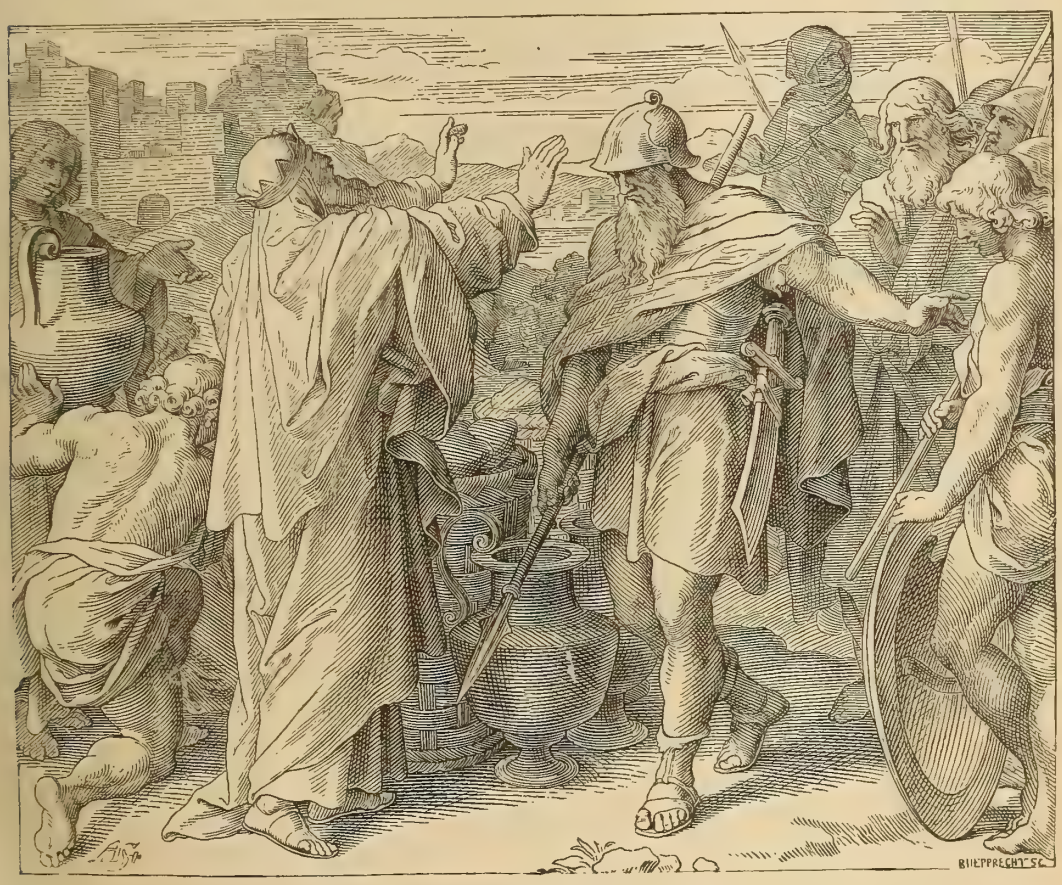
Lot Rescued and Brought Back.

But one that had escaped from the battle fled to Abram, where he dwelt under the oak-tree of Mamre, and told him that Lot had been carried away captive by the kings of the east. And when Abram heard that Lot his nephew had been carried away, he armed his servants—men born in his house and trained for war. They were three hundred and eighteen in number. Also he had with them certain of the people of Mamre and Aner and Eshcol, princes of the Amorites, for these were confederate with him; with these he pursued the invaders, and overtook them at Laish (which place was afterwards called Dan, and was near to the springs of Jordan). Here they were encamped, thinking that none would attack them.

Then Abram divided the men that were with him into two parts, and attacked the four kings by night from either side of their encampment. So he put them to flight, and pursued them to Hobah, which lies between Damascus and Tadmor of the wilderness. He brought back with him all the goods that they had taken from the five cities, and Lot and his family, and all the prisoners.

And as he returned, the king of Sodom came out to meet him, and said to him, Give me back now the prisoners that thou hast taken out of the hand of the king of

Elam, for they are my own people; but take all the goods to thyself. But Abram answered him, I have taken an oath, lifting up my hand, to the Lord, the most high God, whose are the heaven and the earth, that I will not take a thread or a shoe-latchet from thee. Nothing will I take of thine, lest thou say, and offered him first-fruits, even bread and wine, and blessed him, saying, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, whose are heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. Then Abram gave him a tenth part of all the spoil that he had taken



MELCHIZEDEK BLESSING ABRAM.

I have made Abram rich. Nevertheless, that which the young men my servants have eaten on the way that thou shalt give them. These men, too, that have helped me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

There also came to meet him Melchizedek, king of Salem, a priest of the most high God, And after these things he returned and dwelt at Mamre.

Then God appeared to him in a vision and said, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Abram answered, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing that I am childless?

Then the Lord bade him go forth from

his tent and look up into the heavens, and said, Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. So shall be thy posterity. And Abram believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Then the Lord said, I have brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees that thou mayest inherit this land. Abram said, How shall I know that I shall inherit it. The Lord said, Take a heifer, and a she-goat, and a ram, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

So Abram took them and divided the beasts into two portions, and laid the two portions over against each other; but the birds he divided not. And when the sun went down he fell into a deep sleep, and heard a voice that said, Thy posterity shall dwell in a land that is not theirs, and shall be afflicted four hundred years; but the nation that shall afflict them I will judge. After that they shall go out from among their oppressors with great riches, and shall come again to this land; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And when the sun went down and it was dark, Abram saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass between the portions of the sacrifice, being the tokens of the presence of the Lord. Then, as Abram had passed between the portions, so the Lord passed between them, and a covenant was made between the Lord and Abram; for the custom was that when two thus passed between the portions of a sacrifice a covenant was made between them. And the Lord said, Unto thy race have I given all this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

After these things Abram took to wife Sarai's maid Hagar, the Egyptian. And Sarai dealt so hardly with her that she fled from the tent. But as she lay by a well in the wilderness the angel of God spake to her, saying, Hagar, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? She answered, I flee from the face of Sarai my mistress. The angel said, Go back, and submit thyself to thy mistress. Thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.

"AS THE STARS, SO SHALL BE THY POSTERITY."

And thereafter the well by which Hagar sat when the angel spake to her was called the well of Seeing and Living. So Hagar returned to her mistress; and she bare a son to Abram, who called his name Ishmael. Abram was fourscore and six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to him.

When Abram was now ninety and nine years old, and Ishmael his son thirteen, the Lord appeared again unto him. Then Abram fell on his face before God; and the Lord spake to him again, saying, My covenant is

with thee, and I will make thee the father of many nations. Hereafter thy name shall not be any more Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; because I have made thee a father of many nations. And I will give thee, and thy children after thee, this land of Canaan to be a perpetual possession.

Also He said to him, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah. I will bless her, and give her a son of thee. She shall be a mother of nations, and kings shall come from her.

The Three Travellers.

Not many days after, as Abraham sat in his tent-door, where he dwelt under the oak of Mamre, he espied three travellers. And when he saw them he ran from the tent-door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground before them, and said to him that seemed chief among them, My lord, if I have found favor in thy sight, pass not on at once, but turn aside to visit me. Let a little water be fetched that ye may wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread that ye may refresh yourselves. After that ye shall pass on. And the man said, So do as thou hast said.

Then Abraham hastened unto Sarah where she sat in the tent, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it, and bake cakes upon the hearth. This done, he ran to the stalls of the cattle and took thence a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who hasted to cook it. And he took butter and milk and the calf that had been cooked, and set them before the travellers, and stood by them under the tree as they ate.

After this the men rose up, and departed, having their faces turned towards Sodom. And Abraham went with them to bring them on their way. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; for he shall become a great nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, to do judgment and justice.

A Wicked City.

Then the Lord said to Abraham, Because the report of Sodom and Gomorrah is very evil, and their sin very grievous, I have come to see whether they have altogether sinned according to the report.

Then two of the three went on towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. He bethought him of Lot, his brother's son, and of his household, and said to the Lord, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there may be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous? That be far from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? The Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, I will spare all the place for their sake.

Abraham spake again, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I be but dust and ashes. Peradventure there may lack five of the fifty: wilt thou destroy all the city for the lack of five?

The Lord said, If I find forty and five, I will not destroy it.

Abraham said again, Peradventure forty will be found there.

And the Lord answered, I will not do it if there be forty there.

Then Abraham said, Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Peradventure there shall be thirty found there.

The Lord said, I will not do it. if I find thirty there.

Abraham spake again, Peradventure there shall be twenty found there.

The Lord answered, I will spare it for twenty's sake.

Yet once again did Abraham speak. Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once only. Peradventure ten shall be found there. And the Lord said, I will spare it for ten's sake. Then Abraham was satisfied; he left off praying for Sodom, and returned to his home.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM FORETOLD TO ABRAHAM.

The angels that God had sent to see Sodom came into it in the evening. They met Lot in the gate of the city. Lot thought they were two men who were on a journey. He therefore asked them to stay in his house that night, and prepared supper for them, and treated them kindly. The angels found that all the other men of the city cared for nothing but wickedness, and they said to Lot, Have you sons or daughters in the city besides those in this house? If you have, bring them out of the place, for the wickedness of it is become great before the Lord; and he has sent us to destroy it. All the good people in the city could save their lives by leaving at once.

Lot went out and said to the men who had married his daughters, Up! get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy it. But they would not believe him. When the morning dawned, the angels hastened Lot.

ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC

and said, Arise, take your wife and your two daughters that are here, and get away, lest you be destroyed in the punishment of the city. Strange to say, he still delayed; but the angels caught them by the hand, and brought them out of the city, and said, Escape for your life; do not look behind

LOT AND HIS FAMILY FLEEING FROM SODOM.

you, nor stop anywhere in the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed.

Lot feared to go to the mountain, and he said, There is a little city in this plain; let me stay there. It is but a little one; will not God spare it? And the angel said, I will not overthrow this city, for which you have spoken. Hasten! escape to it; for I cannot do anything till you are come into it. The name of the little city was Zoar. As soon as Lot came into it, the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven, and overthrew those cities, and all the inhabitants of the plain, and everything that grew upon the ground. But Lot's wife turned and looked back upon the burning cities, and she became a pillar of salt

After these things Abraham went down to sojourn in the south country and dwelt among the Philistines. And the Lord gave to Sarah a son as he had promised to her and Abraham. And Abraham called his name Isaac. Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born.

And when Isaac came to be a larger boy,

Abraham made a great feast. Now Ishmael had thought that he should be his father's heir, and when he saw that he was supplanted, he was very wroth, and spake bitter words, and would have done harm to the child. His mother also encouraged him in his misdoing. Then Sarah said to Abraham, cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of a bondwoman shall not be heir along with my son, even with Isaac. But the thing was very grievous to Abraham, for he loved his son Ishmael. Then the Lord said to Abraham, Let not this thing that Sarah asketh of thee be grievous unto thee. Hearken to her words, for indeed the blessing that I have promised to thee, and to thy children after thee, is not in Ishmael but in Isaac. Nevertheless, I will make of Ishmael a great nation.

Then Abraham believed that no harm should happen to the lad. Therefore he rose up early the next morning, and gave Hagar provision of bread and a bottle of water, putting it on her shoulder, and sent her and her son away. And Ishmael was now sixteen years of age or thereabouts. So Hagar departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. But all the water in the bottle was spent, and the lad lay under a shrub, likely to perish of thirst. Then Hagar went and sat herself down a long way off from the lad, even as far as a man may shoot

DEPARTURE OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

an arrow. For she said to herself, Let me not see the death of the child. And she lifted up her voice and wept.

Then the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said, Hagar, what aileth thee? Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand. I will make him a great nation. Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer, and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

The Seven Lambs.

While Abraham dwelt at Beersheba, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, with Phichol, who was captain of his host, came to him, and said, We see that God is with thee in all that thou doest. Now therefore swear unto me that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, or with my son, or with my son's son, but wilt deal truly with me, as I have dealt truly with thee. And Abraham said, "I will swear." But he said also, Thy servants have taken a well by force from my servants.

Abimelech answered, I know not who hath done this thing. Thou hast not told me aught of it till this day, nor indeed have I heard of it at all. Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs by themselves; and when Abimelech asked him why he had so done, he said, Thou shalt take these seven ewe lambs from me, and thy taking them shall be a pledge that indeed my servants have digged this well. So these two, Abraham and Abimelech, made a covenant or agreement between them. For many days did Abraham dwell in Beersheba, and he planted a grove there and worshipped the Lord.

After these things God tried Abraham's faith, saying to him, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I shall show thee.

The Sacrifice of Isaac.

So Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave wood for a burnt-offering, and journeyed towards the place of which God had told him. On the third day of his journeying he saw the place afar off. Then he said to the young men, Abide here, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and will come again to you. For, indeed, he did not doubt but that the lad should come back again, even though he should slay him for a burnt-offering, for he believed that the Lord would even raise him up from the dead.

And he took the wood for the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; he took fire also, and a knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to Abraham, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the wood.

Then he stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham! And he said, Here am I. Then the Lord said, Lay not thine hand on the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me

Then Abraham looked behind him, and saw a ram caught in the thicket by his horns, and he took the ram and offered it up for a sacrifice instead of Isaac his son.

Then the Lord spake again to him, saying, Because thou hast done this thing, and not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy posterity as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand of the seashore for multitude. And in thy posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. Then Abraham returned to the young men.

After these things Sarah died, being one hundred and twenty-seven years old; and Abraham came to mourn for her, and to weep for her.

And Abraham ceased from mourning for the dead, and spake to the children of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me the possession of a burial-place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC.

The children of Heth answered him, Thou art a prince among us; choose one of our sepulchres wherein to bury thy dead: none of us shall refuse thee his sepulchre.

Then Abraham bowed himself to them, and said, If ye are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, intercede for me with Ephron, that he may sell me the cave

of Machpelah that he hath, which is in the end of his field: for as much money as it is worth shall he sell it me for a burying-place.

Then Ephron the Hittite said to Abraham, My lord, I give thee the field and the cave; here in the presence of all the people I give it thee for a possession: bury thy dead.

Then Abraham bowed himself down, and said, If thou art willing that I should have the field, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field. Take the money from me, then will I bury my dead.

Ephron answered him, My lord, hearken unto me: The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; but what is that between me and thee? This was about two hundred and forty dollars of our money.

Then Abraham weighed to Ephron the four hundred shekels of silver, even the price which he had named in the presence of the people. And the field was made over to him in the presence of all the people.

After this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah.

Finding a Wife for Isaac.

Abraham was now old, and it seemed good to him that he should find a wife for Isaac his son. So he spake to Eliezer of Damascus, who was his steward and the eldest servant of his house, and said, Swear to me by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for Isaac my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. Thou shalt go unto my own kindred, and take a wife from among them for my son.

Now Abraham knew that Nahor, his father's brother, had had sons born to him of Milcah, Sarah's sister, and that they dwelt in Haran, where he himself had dwelt before he came into the land of Canaan.

Then Eliezer answered, Haply the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land: must I bring thy son again into the land from which thou camest out?

Abraham said, Beware that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, sware unto me that he would give this land to me, and to my children after me. If the woman will not follow thee, then thou shalt be free of thy oath: but, in any case, thou shalt not persuade my son to go back to that land. Then Eliezer sware to his master that he would do his bidding. And he took ten camels of his master's—for all Abraham's goods were in his hand—and departed to Haran, in Mesopotamia, which was the city of Nahor.

He Comes to a Well.

And when he was come to the city, he made his camels kneel down by a well that was outside the walls; and it was evening-time, when the women go out to draw water. He prayed, saying, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, show kindness to my master Abraham. Let this come to pass: if the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher that I may drink, shall say, Drink, and I will draw for thy camels also; let the same be she whom thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; then shall I know that thou hast showed kindness to my master.

And while he was yet speaking, Rebekah, that was the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor and Milcah, came to the well. And she was a very fair virgin; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up again. Eliezer said to her, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water out of thy pitcher. So she let down her pitcher from her shoulder, whereon she carried it, to her

hand, and gave him to drink. And when he had drunk, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, till they shall have done drinking. So she hasted and emptied the pitcher into the trough, and went down again to the well, and drew for all the camels. And the man held his peace, wondering whether or not the Lord had prospered his journey.

When the camels had done drinking, he gave her an earring of gold of half a shekel in weight, and two bracelets that weighed ten shekels together. And he said to her, Whose daughter art thou? Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge? She answered, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor. Then the man bowed down his head and worshipped, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, for he hath not forgotten his mercy and truth, but hath led me to the house of my master's brethren.

ABRAHAM'S SERVANT MEETING REBEKAH.

Meanwhile Rebekah ran and told all these things to her kindred. Now she had a brother, whose name was Laban; and Laban,

when he saw the earring and the bracelets upon his sister's hands, and heard all that

wherefore standest thou without? I have prepared thy lodging, and room for the

ISAAC WELCOMING REBEKAH.

his sister said, went out to meet the man, and said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord;

camels. Then Eliezer came into the house; and Laban ungirded his camels, and gave

straw and provender for his camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men that were with him. Meat also was set before him to eat; but he said, I will not eat, till I have told my errand. And Laban said, Speak on.

The Man Tells his Errand.

The man said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath greatly blessed my master, and he is become great; for the Lord hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold. The Lord gave my master a son in his old age, and my master hath given him all that he hath. Now my master made me swear that I would not take a wife for his son from the daughters of Canaan, but would go to his own kindred to seek among them a wife for his son. So I came hither. And I prayed to God, and said, I will stand by the well; and when the damsel cometh to draw water from the well, and I say to her, Give me to drink; if the damsel say, Drink, and I will draw for thy camels also; let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed for my master's son. And lo! even before I had done speaking, Rebekah came down to draw water of the well. And she did as I had said. Then I asked her, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel. Then I put the earring in her ear and the bracelets upon her hands. Then I bowed down my head and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to find a wife for my master's son among his own kindred. And now tell me whether ye will deal truly and kindly with my master, that I may go away?

Laban and Bethuel answered, The thing is from the Lord: we cannot say bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is here, take her to be the wife of thy master's son, as the Lord hath spoken. Then Eliezer worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. Also he brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. After this he and the men that were with him ate and drank, and tarried all night.

Rebekah Goes to Meet Isaac.

The next morning they rose up, and Eliezer said, Send me away to my master. But the damsel's mother and brother said, Let Rebekah abide with us a few days, ten at the least. But he said, Hinder me not, seeing that the Lord hath prospered me; send me away to my master. They answered, We will call the damsel, and ask whether she be willing. So they called Rebekah, and asked her, Wilt thou go with this man? And Rebekah said, I will go. So they sent away Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed her.

So Rebekah and her nurse, and the damsels that were with her, departed with Abraham's servant, riding upon camels. Now, when they came near to the place where Isaac dwelt, it chanced that Isaac had gone out into the field at eventide to meditate. When Rebekah saw him she asked, What man is that? Eliezer answered her, That is my master. Then she alighted from her camel, and covered herself with a veil. And Eliezer told Isaac all that he had done. So Rebekah became Isaac's wife, and he was comforted after his mother's death. Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife. Abraham lived yet thirty and five years after these things. And he died in a good old age, being one hundred and seventy-five years old. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah.

ABRAHAM'S SERVANT MEETING REBEKAH AT THE WELL

CHAPTER IV.

B. C. 1822.

THE STORY OF ESAU AND JACOB—BIRTHRIGHT SOLD FOR A MESS OF POTTAGE—TWO KIDS FROM THE FLOCK—JACOB OBTAINS THE BLESSING OF ISAAC—DREAM OF THE LADDER AND ANGELS—JACOB VISITS LABAN—LEAH AND RACHEL—SERVING FOURTEEN YEARS TO OBTAIN RACHEL FOR A WIFE—HAPPY MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

ISAAC had two sons, named Esau and Jacob. Though they were twin brothers, yet they grew up very unlike each other: Esau was a hunter, and Jacob was a shepherd. Esau was the elder of the two brothers, and as such, he had certain privileges called the birthright. The first-born son was always held in honor next to his parents—he had twice as much of his father's goods as the other sons. When the father died, then he became the head of the family, and ruled over his brothers and sisters. As in those days the father was the priest and minister of religion to the family, so this office at his death passed to his eldest son. With the birthright went the father's special blessing.

One day Esau came in from the field where he had been hunting, or working, to the tent where Jacob was. He was very hungry and tired: he felt as if he should die, he was so faint.

When Esau came in, Jacob was boiling some red lentils in oil. These, when cooked make a mess of red pottage. Esau said to his brother, Give me that mess of red pottage, for I am hungry and faint. Jacob unkindly said, I will not let you have it unless you will sell me your birthright for it.

Esau did not care much for houses and lands, and silver and gold. And he said to Jacob, I am at the point of death, and what good will a birthright do me? So he sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage, and did eat and drink, and then went on his way.

When Isaac was so old that his eyes were dim, and he could not see, he called Esau to him and said: I am an old man, and I know not how soon I may die. Take then, I pray thee, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out into the field, and get me some venison. And make me a nice dish of it, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat, and bless thee before I die.

And Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke to Esau his son; and Esau went to the field to hunt for venison. And Rebekah told Jacob, word for word, what Isaac had said to Esau. And she said, Now, my son, obey my voice, and do as I command you. Go to the flock, and bring me two good kids from the goats, and I will season the meat well, and make such a dish as will please thy father. And thou shalt bring it to thy father,

that he may eat, and bless thee before he dies.

Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel of me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon myself, and not a blessing.

His mother said, Upon me be thy curse, my son. Only do as I bid thee, and go fetch the young kids. And he went, and brought them to his mother, and she made of them such a dish as his father loved.

Jacob in Esau's Clothes.

And Rebekah took the best clothes of her eldest son Esau, which were in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids on his hands, and on the smooth part of his neck. And she gave the meat and the bread into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came near to Isaac, and said, My father. And Isaac said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? Jacob said, I am Esau thy first-born; I have done as thou didst bid me. Rise, I pray thee, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

Isaac said, How is it thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord led the way. And Isaac said to Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my son Esau, or not. And Jacob went near to Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And as he could not see, he blessed him, thinking he was Esau. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

And Isaac ate of the venison, and drank of the wine that Jacob brought. And he said, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And Jacob came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothes and blessed him, and said, The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. And he told his son that God would take care of him, and give him great wealth, and make him a ruler over many nations.

Jacob had scarce left the presence of Isaac his father, when Esau his brother came in from the hunt. And he also cooked some meat and brought it to his father, and said, Rise now, and eat of thy son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said to him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy first-born, Esau. And Isaac trembled greatly, and said, Who, and where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it to me, and I have eaten before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed.

The Blessing Stolen.

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with a great and exceeding bitter cry, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came, and by fraud hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is he not rightly named Jacob? for he hath twice supplanted me. He took away my birthright; and now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Isaac said to Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants, and have made him rich and great; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? Esau said, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

And Isaac, pierced to the heart, said unto him, By thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt

serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt rule in the land, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

Esau, more ready to blame others than himself, hated Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him; and he planned to kill his brother, as soon as his father was laid in the grave. He thought that Isaac's death was near at hand, but the old man lived many years longer; and in the meantime this threat of Esau's came to the ears of Rebekah.

She sent for Jacob, and told him that Esau meant to kill him, and bade him go to Haran, where Laban, her brother, dwelt, and stay with him till Esau's anger was turned away. When he has forgotten what thou hast done to him, she said, I will send and fetch thee from thence. Why should I lose both of you in one day?

And Rebekah made an excuse to Isaac for sending her favorite son away. She was not pleased with Esau's wives, nor did she wish her son Jacob to take a wife from the daughters of Heth. She told Isaac so, and

ISAAC BLESSING JACOB.

Isaac sent Jacob to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, his mother's father, and bade him take a wife from among the daughters of Laban, the brother of Rebekah.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and took his way toward Haran. Jacob set out from Beer-sheba all alone. It was not usual in those days to do this, as there was danger of meeting wild beasts or wicked men. But

Jacob stole out in this quiet way from his home, because he was afraid of his own brother Esau; and he wished to make no show or parade to excite Esau's feelings, and make him more angry and jealous.

And he went on toward Haran; and when he came to a certain place, at sunset, he stayed there all night. He took a stone and placed it so that it would do for pillows, and then laid down to sleep, for he was very tired. And as he slept he dreamed. And in his dream he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And be-

JACOB'S VISION OF ANGELS.

hold, the Lord stood above it, and said that he would do great things for him. And he said, Behold, I am with thee, and will bring thee again to this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

And Jacob woke out of his sleep, and said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up on one end for a pillar, to mark the place, so that he would know it when he came back from his errand. And he poured oil on top of the pillar, as a token of praise to God. And he called the name of that place Bethel: that is, The House of God.

The Sheep at the Well.

And Jacob vowed a vow—or, as we say, he took an oath—and said, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me food and clothes, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the east. And he looked, and saw a well in a field; and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. And a great stone was on the mouth of the well. And there were all the flocks gathered. And the shepherds rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep, and then put the stone back in its place again.

Jacob drew near and asked them whence they came. We are from Haran, they said. Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? inquired Jacob. And they said, We know him. Jacob said to them, Is he well? They said, He is well; and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh this way with her sheep. And he told the men to make haste and water the sheep, and then go and feed them. But they said they could not do this; that they must wait until all the flocks were gathered there; then the stone would be rolled from the mouth of the well, and they could water the sheep. This was so there would be no waste of the precious water.

And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, for she took care of them. And when Jacob saw Rachel, he drew near, and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel and wept for joy. And he told her that her father was his uncle, and that he was Rebekah's son. And Rachel ran and told her father.

Laban's Two Daughters.

When Laban heard that Jacob, his sister's son, was near, he ran to meet him, and threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And Jacob told Laban what he had come for. Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh; and Jacob stayed with him for the space of a month. Then Laban said to Jacob, Because thou art related to me, shouldst thou work for me for nothing? Tell me what shall thy wages be?

Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well formed. And Jacob loved Rachel. So when

Laban asked what wages he would take, he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter. Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man. So stay with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, so great was his love for her.

whom he had wed; and he went at once to Laban, and said, What is this thou hast done to me? did I not serve with thee for Rachel? Why hast thou played me such a trick?

Laban said, It is not the custom of our country to give the younger before the first-born. Be true to Leah, and thou shalt have Rachel also, if thou wilt serve me for another

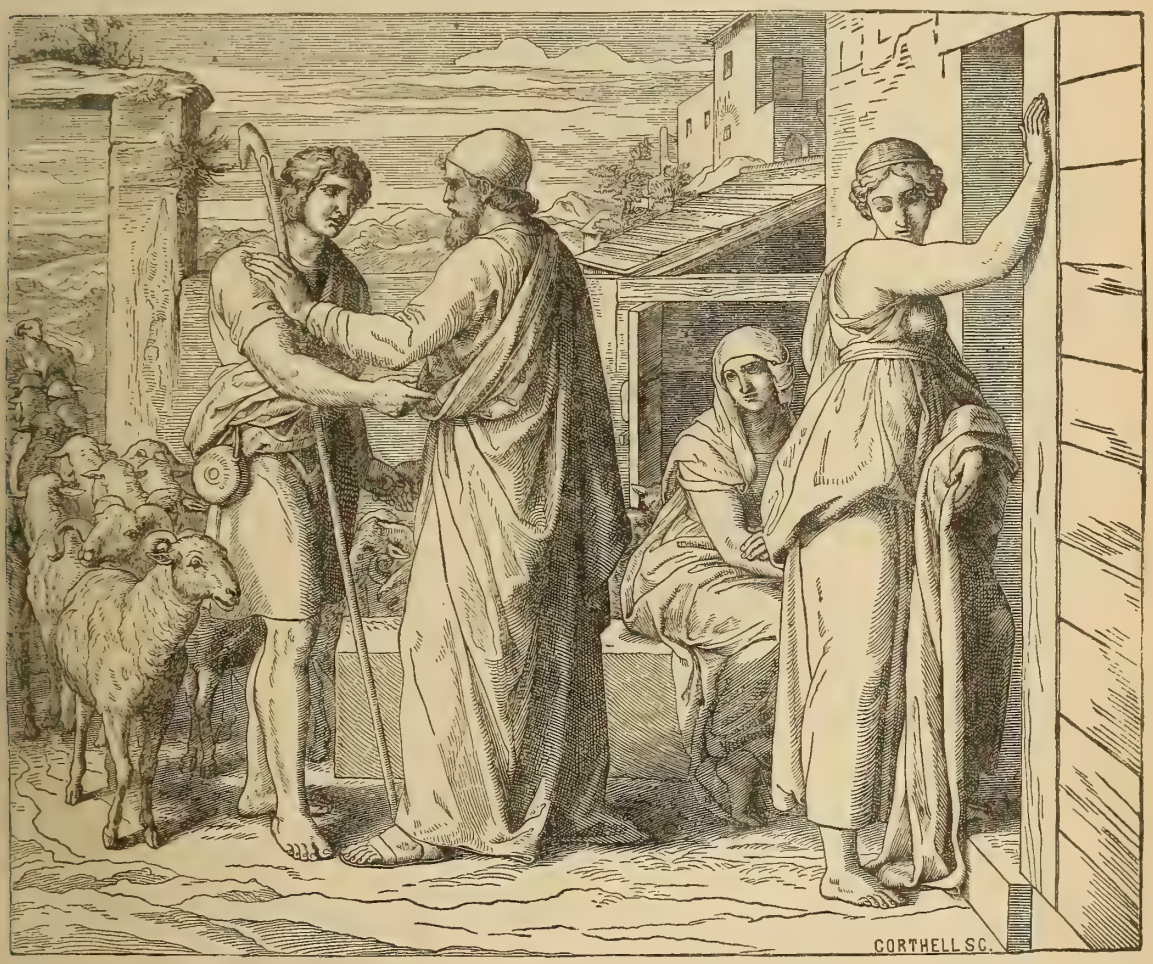
JACOB MEETING RACHEL.

And Jacob said to Laban, Give me my wife, for the time is up that I said I would serve thee. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. And in the evening he brought in Leah, closely veiled, so that her face could not be seen, and Jacob took her for his wife. In the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah

seven years. And Jacob did so, and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel for a wife, for there was no law in those days to prevent a man from having more than one wife. And Jacob loved Rachel far more than he did Leah, and stayed with Laban even another seven years on her account. God gave children to Leah; but Rachel had no children,

and her heart was sad, and she was very jealous of her sister. But at last God heard her prayer, and gave Rachel a son. And she called his name Joseph.

By this time Jacob had become a rich man, and had flocks and herds of his own. And Laban's son spoke ill of Jacob; and



LABAN HIRING JACOB.

Laban was not the good friend to him that he had been. And God told Jacob to go back to his own country. So Jacob put his wives and his sons on camels, and took all the flocks and herds, and everything that he owned, and left Laban, and went back to the

home of Isaac, his father. And on the way a company of angels met him. And when Jacob saw them he said, This is God's host. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim, which means Two hosts, or camps.

Jacob was still afraid of his brother Esau, and had sent messengers to speak with him, and to offer him rich gifts if he would be at peace with him. The messengers brought word that Esau was on his way to meet Jacob with four hundred men. Jacob was in great fear, and prayed to God to save him from the hands of his brother who hated him

so. He said, I am not worthy the least of thy mercies, and of all the kind care thou hast given me. But save me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me.

One night Jacob was left alone, and there came an angel, who wrestled with him till the break of day. And when the angel saw that he could not throw Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh and put it out of joint. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And Jacob said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And the angel said to him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. The angel said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men. The word Israel means, A prince of God.

And Jacob said to the angel, who was in the form of a man, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Why dost thou need to ask my name? And he blessed him then and there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peni-el: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is saved. The word Peni-el means, The face of God.

JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL.

When Jacob raised his eyes, he saw Esau coming with his four hundred men. And he went out in front of his wives and children, and bowed down to the ground seven times on his way to his brother. And Esau ran

JOSEPH MADE RULER OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT.

to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they both wept together, and all the past was forgiven. Then Esau raised his eyes, and saw the women and children, and said, Who are those with thee? And Jacob said, The children which God hath given thy servant. And they all bowed down before Esau. Then Esau said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? Jacob told him they were sent as a present to him. Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep what is thine own.

And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight (that is, if thou art good friends with me), then take the present I bring. For to have seen thy face, and to know thou art pleased with me, is as if I had seen the face of God He said God had been good to him, and he had enough and to spare, and he urged Esau so strongly to take his gifts, that Esau did so. And Esau went back to Seir, where he lived; and Jacob went on his way. And God told him to go up to Bethel and dwell there for a while, and build there an altar to the God who came to him when he fled from his brother Esau.

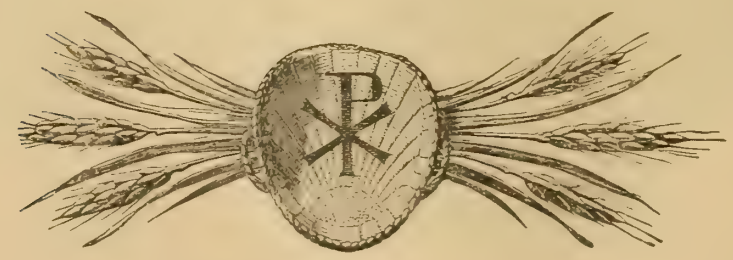
THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

Now Rachel when she left her father's house stole some of the images that she had been wont to worship. And when God told Jacob to go up to Bethel he said to his household, and to all that were with him,

put away the strange gods that are among you, and let us go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who helped me when I was in distress, and took care of me on my journey. And they took their earrings from their ears, and gave them and the idols to Jacob, and he buried them in the ground under an oak tree which was near Shechem. And they came to Bethel, and Jacob built an altar there and gave praise to God.

It was here that Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under an oak. God appeared to Jacob again and blessed him, telling him his name should not be called Jacob any more, but he should be called Israel. And a promise was given to Jacob that he should be the father of nations, and would have kings for his posterity. Then God said to Jacob, The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy children after thee will I give the land. And God went up from Jacob in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in that place; it was a pillar of stone, and he poured oil on it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God talked with him Bethel. The meaning of the name Bethel is, the house of God. Jacob had been blessed and he set up the stone and poured oil on it to mark the place where the promise was made to him that nations should come from him.

As they went from Bethel, they came near to a place called Ephrath—where Bethlehem now is. And there God gave Jacob and Rachel another son. And his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried on the way to Bethlehem. And Jacob set up a stone on her grave, to mark the spot where she lay. Jacob came back to Hebron, to the land where Isaac his father dwelt, and made his home there. And Isaac lived to be one hundred and eighty years old, and then he died, and Jacob and Esau buried him.



CHAPTER V.

B. C. 1729.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH—A BOY IN A PIT—SOLD AWAY INTO EGYPT—THE COAT DYED WITH BLOOD—TELLING THE MEANING OF DREAMS—WEARING THE KING'S RING—FAMINE IN ALL LANDS—JOSEPH'S BRETHREN IN EGYPT—JACOB AND BENJAMIN.

JACOB had twelve sons. The youngest two were Joseph and Benjamin, whose mother was Rachel. Jacob's sons were shepherds; and Joseph too, as soon as he was old enough, was sent out into the fields to help his brother to feed the flocks. Now of all his sons, Jacob loved Joseph the most. He was the child of Rachel whom Jacob dearly loved; and also Joseph was more upright and true than his elder brothers. When he was with them out in the fields he saw them doing many wrong things, and he thought their father ought to know it. So Joseph told him of all their wicked conduct, and this made them dislike him very much.

Besides this, they had another reason for hating him. Their father Jacob, to show how much he loved his favorite son, gave him a coat of many colors. This was a mark of very great distinction and honor, and it is supposed also to have been a sign that the person wearing it was intended to be his father's heir. All these things made Joseph's brothers so angry and jealous that they could not speak peaceably to him; they hated him, and were rough and unkind to him.

Joseph's Strange Dream.

One night Joseph dreamed a very strange dream, and he told it to his brothers. He said to them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. I thought we were all in the field binding sheaves, and, lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and bowed low to my sheaf.

Joseph's brothers were very angry when they heard this dream, and they said scornfully, Do you indeed think that you will reign over us? and do you really suppose that you will have the mastery over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words.

After this he had another strange dream which he told to his brothers. He said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, bowed down to me.

Joseph told this dream to his father as well as to his brothers; and his father rebuked him gently, and said, What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow down ourselves to you to the earth?

And his brothers envied him. But his father thought a great deal about this dream and the strangeness of it, and wondered what it could really mean.

You know, when people have large flocks of sheep and goats and cattle to take care of, they are obliged to take them from place to place to get fresh grass for them to eat. So, after a time, Joseph's brothers took their father's flock to Shechem, to feed them there. One day Jacob said to Joseph, Your brothers are feeding the flock in Shechem. Come, and I will send you to them. Jacob never thought there could be any danger, and Joseph was not afraid. He was quite ready and willing to go wherever he was sent, so he answered, Here am I. And Jacob said, Go, I pray you, see whether it be well with your brothers, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again.

With a light heart, Joseph set off to do his father's bidding. How little could either of them know, when he left his father's tents that day, that he would never return to that home any more; and that years and years would pass away before he should again see that dear father's face.

JOSEPH'S DREAM OF THE SUN, MOON AND ELEVEN STARS.

Without any fear of coming evil, Joseph passed on, out of the vale of Hebron, till he came to Shechem; but his brothers were nowhere to be seen. He wandered about in the fields, looking for them, but he could not

find them. At last a man saw him as he was wandering about, and asked him, For what are you looking?

Joseph answered, I am looking for my brothers. Tell me, I pray you, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are gone from here; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them in Dothan. But while he was still a long way off, his brothers saw him as he was crossing the valley to meet them; and at the sight of him, wearing the coat of many colors, all their bitter, jealous feelings grew more strong. They hated him, and now their only wish was to kill him.

SHEPHERD LEADING HIS FLOCK.

So they began to plan how it was to be done. They said one to another, Look, this dreamer is coming. Come now, therefore, let us kill him and throw him into some large pit or hole, and then we will say that a savage animal has eaten him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

All of the wicked brothers agreed to this plan except Reuben, the eldest. He was shocked at the thought of killing his young brother. So he said to them, Do not let us kill him. Shed no blood, but throw him into this pit that is here in this lonely place in the wilderness; and do not let us hurt him. For Reuben intended to take him out of the pit again secretly, and to take him back to his father.

After they had cast Joseph into the pit, they coolly sat down to eat bread. But Reuben had gone away. The others were still sitting near the pit eating their meal, when they looked up and saw a company of Ishmaelites, with their camels, coming that way. They had with them some spices and balm and myrrh, which they were carrying down into Egypt to sell there. And now a fresh thought came into the minds of these cruel men; and Judah said to his brothers, What good will it do us if we kill our brother, or if we leave him in this pit to starve to death? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and do not let us hurt him; for after all he is our brother.

And his brethren were content to do as Judah had said. So they lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and when the Ishmaelites passed by, they sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the Ishmaelites took him, and carried him into Egypt to be a slave.

Some time afterwards, when his brothers were out of sight, Reuben went to the pit to draw up poor Joseph, and to take him back to his father again. He looked in, and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit! In great distress and grief he tore his clothes. In that country it is a sign of great sorrow and mourning to tear the clothes; and Reuben showed by this how bitterly he grieved.

He went at once to his brothers, and said to them, The child is gone—he is not in the pit; and I, what shall I do? where shall I go?

And now they began to consult together what lie they should tell their father, so that he might not think they had done anything to Joseph. This is what they did. They took Joseph's coat of many colors, and they killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood. Then they carried the coat, all covered with blood, to their father, and said to him, We found this; do you think it can really be Joseph's coat or not?

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

When Jacob saw it, he knew it at once, and a terrible pain came into his heart. He said, It is my son's coat; a wild beast has devoured him: Joseph is without a doubt torn in pieces.

And Jacob rent his clothes, and put a

coarse kind of cloth, called sackcloth, upon him (to wear sackcloth is another sign of grief); and he mourned his beloved son many days.

And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted. He said, I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

At last the Ishmaelites with their captive boy, and their camels, laden with spices, arrived in Egypt.

Now Joseph was a very handsome youth; and Potiphar, who was an officer of King Pharaoh, and captain of the guard, thought he would like to have him for a servant. So he bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had carried him down into that country. And the Lord was with Joseph, so that he became a very prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

But what a change this was for him! Instead of the robe of honor—the coat of many colors—he now wore the dress of a slave. Instead of being in the position of the favorite son of a rich and powerful chief, he was now a servant in a strange land. And instead of being free to look after his father's flocks in the green valleys and on the steep slopes of beautiful Canaan—he himself a young shepherd chief—he now had to wait upon the orders of his master, and could only go where he was sent.

Joseph Promoted.

And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him faithfully; so Potiphar made him overseer—that is, gave him charge—over his house; and all that he had he put into Joseph's hands.

From the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field. And Potiphar left the whole management of everything to Joseph, without even taking the trouble to look after him, for he knew that Joseph was faithful and upright.

But it came to pass after these things that his master's wife, who was a very wicked woman, tried to make Joseph as wicked as herself. She was deceitful, and would do things behind her husband's back that she would not do if he were near; and she wanted Joseph to be deceitful too. But he would not listen to her; for he feared God, and he was true to his master.

Many times she tried to tempt him into sin; but he said to her, My master trusts me. He has given into my charge everything that is in the house, and he has been very kind to me. How, then, can I deceive him? it would be a great wickedness, and a sin against God.

Accused by a Woman.

His master's wife became very angry at last, and she determined to get him into trouble and disgrace. So one day, as soon as Potiphar, her husband, had come into the house, she went to him and said, The Hebrew servant whom you have brought unto us is not as good as you think him to be. When you were out he came and was very rude to me, and mocked me; but when I cried out, he was frightened and ran away.

When Potiphar heard the words of his wife which she spoke to him, saying, After this manner did your servant behave to me, he was exceedingly angry. He never thought that his wicked wife was telling him what was untrue; he believed all that she

said, and so he was determined to punish Joseph. He took him, and put him into the prison which was in his house. It was a place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison.

Once more, you see, Joseph was suffering from the wickedness of others. He had done nothing wrong, he had bravely done the right, yet now he was punished as a wrong-doer. He was bound with heavy chains; and the iron chains that were round his feet hurt him very much; and his heart was sad.

But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy. The keeper of the prison treated Joseph with kindness, so that before very long his chains were taken off, and he was allowed to walk about. Then, when the keeper of the prison saw how perfectly he was to be trusted, he gave into Joseph's care all the other prisoners that were in the prison; and whatever they did there he was the doer of it.

Two More Prisoners.

Nine long, weary years passed away, and Joseph was still a prisoner. Though he was so much trusted, yet he was not allowed to leave the prison; he was still in disgrace—still suffering from the wicked lies of Potiphar's wife.

Now it happened one day that the king of Egypt was very angry with two of his servants. The chief butler and the chief baker had provoked the king so much that he told Potiphar to take them away to prison. Potiphar, therefore, brought them to Joseph, and ordered them to be bound with chains, and told him to be sure and keep them safely.

The chief butler and the chief baker had been for some time in prison, when they both had a dream in the same night. Each of them had a different dream; and when they awoke they could not help thinking about it, and it made them feel very miserable. When Joseph came in to them next morning, as he was always accustomed to do, to give them their food, he noticed at once that they were looking very much cast down. So he asked Pharaoh's servants, saying, Why do you look so sad to-day?

And they said to him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no one to tell us the meaning of it. And Joseph said, God sends dreams, and he can show you what they mean; so tell me, I pray you, what it is you have dreamed.

A Vine With Three Branches.

And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me. And on the vine were three branches; and it seemed as if these branches began to bud and to blossom. Then clusters of grapes grew on them, and the grapes were quite ripe. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into the king's hand.

This was the butler's dream. And when Joseph heard it, he knew at once what the meaning of it was; for God gave him wisdom, and the power to explain or interpet dreams.

And Joseph said to the chief butler, This is the meaning of your dream. The three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will take you out of prison, and will let you go back to your place in the king's house. And you shall give the cup of wine into Pharaoh's hand again, as you used to do when you were his butler. But do remember me when it shall be well with you, and show your kindness to me, I pray you; and tell Pharaoh about me, so that I may be taken out of this prison. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews;

and here also I have done nothing that they should shut me up in a place like this.

Three White Baskets.

When the chief baker saw what a happy meaning there was to the butler's dream, he was in a great hurry to tell about his own; and he said to Joseph, In my dream, I thought that I had three white baskets on my head. In the top basket there were all manner of cakes, and of baked meats, for Pharaoh; and the birds came and ate all the cakes and baked meats out of the basket that was on my head.

Joseph told him the meaning of his dream. He said, The three baskets mean three days. In three days Pharaoh will take you out of prison, and will have you hung up on a tree; and when you are dead, the birds will come and will eat your flesh off you.

Just as Joseph had said, it all came to pass. Three days after he had explained the meaning of the dreams, it was Pharaoh's birthday; and the king made a great feast for all his servants. Then he sent for the chief butler and the chief baker out of prison; and when they came before him, he forgave the butler, and said that he might wait upon him as he had done before: so the butler gave the cup again into Pharaoh's hand.

But the king would not forgive the chief baker. He ordered him to be hanged, just as Joseph had told him he would do.

The butler was a very ungrateful man. He quite forgot Joseph; he quite forgot the earnest request that he would mention Joseph to the king, and get him taken out of prison. Month after month the poor prisoner waited, hoping that some one would come to set him free; but he waited in vain.

God had not forgotten Joseph, though he chose to try his patience by keeping him so long in prison. In his own good time he prepared the way for setting the prisoner free; and this was how he brought it about.

Two full years had passed away since the ungrateful butler had left the prison (where Joseph had now been shut up for more than eleven years), when one night Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had a very strange dream.

The Fat and Lean Cows.

He thought he was standing by the river Nile, which runs through the land of Egypt; and, behold, there came up out of the river seven very nice-looking fat cows. In that country cattle are very fond of standing quite up to their necks in water, both because of the heat, and also to protect themselves from the flies and insects. These cows that Pharaoh was watching in his dream began to feed in a meadow. Afterwards he thought he saw seven other kine, or cows, come up out of the river; they were very thin and ugly, and they stood by the other cows upon the brink of the river. And the thin, ugly cows ate up the fat, nice-looking ones. Then Pharaoh awoke.

But he slept again, and had another strange dream. This time he thought he saw seven ears of corn come up upon one stalk, full of good grain. And, behold, seven thin ears, all shrivelled and withered with the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin ears ate up the seven good and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

Sends for Joseph.

In the morning his spirit was troubled. He felt that his dreams must have a meaning, and he longed to have them explained to him. So he sent for all the wise men of Egypt, and for the men who studied secret arts, and who pretended to understand dreams; but when the king had told them

his dreams, not one of them could tell him the meaning of them.

At last the butler thought of Joseph. He felt ashamed and sorry that he could have forgotten him so long, and that he had not kept his promise to him. He spoke to the youug man, an Hebrew, servant to Potiphar, the captain of the guard; and we told him our dreams, and he explained to us the meaning of them. He said that I should be the king's butler again, but that the baker would be hanged. And it all happened

JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAMS.

king, and said, I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in prison in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; each of us had a different dream. And there was there with us a

exactly as he had told us. When Pharaoh heard this, he ordered some men to go quickly and bring Joseph to him. So they went in haste and took him out of prison, where he had been so long. Then he shaved off his beard, and cut his hair short, in the way the Egyptians were accustomed to do;

and he changed his garments, to make himself fit to appear before the king. Then, when he was quite ready, they brought him to Pharaoh.

And the king said to Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one to tell me what it means. But I hear that you are able to explain the meaning of dreams.

And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me—I cannot do it of myself; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

What the Dreams Meant.

And Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams. And Joseph said unto the king, Both the dreams have the same meaning; and God has showed Pharaoh what he is going to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears of corn are seven years; the dream is one. And the seven thin kine, and the seven thin ears of corn, are also seven years—seven years of famine.

This is what God is going to do, and what he has shown to Pharaoh. There are going to be seven years of very great plenty in all the land of Egypt. But afterwards there will come seven years of famine. And all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine shall consume the land; for it shall be very grievous. And the reason that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, is because God will certainly bring it to pass; and he will do it soon.

When Joseph had finished explaining about the dreams to Pharaoh, he began to advise the king what to do. He said, Let Pharaoh look out a man who is very prudent and wise, and let him be set over the land of Egypt. And while the seven years of plenty last, let him be careful to gather up all the food of those good years that come, and save up corn for Pharaoh. So, when the seven years of famine come, there will be food for the people; and the land will not be destroyed with famine, even though no corn will be growing in the fields.

Made Ruler of Egypt.

And Pharaoh said to his servants, Where can we find such a wise man as Joseph? for the Spirit of God is in him. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Because God has showed you all this, I know that you are more wise and prudent than any one else. So I will set you over my house, and all my people shall be ruled as you advise. And you shall be greater than any other man in my kingdom, except myself.

Here was a great and wonderful change for Joseph. In the morning he was a prisoner and a slave; before evening came he was like a prince—honored and trusted by the king, and made the greatest man in all that land. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.

And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand; and he gave him beautiful garments to wear, and he put a gold chain round his neck. He also made him to ride in a very grand chariot—one of his own carriages—and they called him the Father of the country.

And the king said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without you shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. By this Pharaoh meant that he gave Joseph the power to do exactly as he liked in all that land, and that no one was to attempt to disobey his orders.

As another mark of his favor, the king gave Joseph a wife out of one of the chief families in Egypt; so he now had a happy home in the country where he had been a slave. And all the people showed him the same respect and reverence that was due to a great prince; for King Pharaoh had made

Joseph ruler over the whole land of Egypt.

Joseph was thirty years old when he was made ruler of Egypt. And as soon as he had gone out from the presence of Pharaoh, he went through all the land of Egypt about the king's business. He did not neglect the work that was given him to do; and as he had before been faithful and true in little things, he now showed himself to be equally upright and honest in great things.

While the seven years of plentiful harvests and abundance of food lasted, Joseph was diligent in gathering up all the spare corn over all the country. In each of the towns and cities he stored up the grain that he had collected out of the fields round those cities. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering; for it was without number.

During those years of plenty, two little sons were born to Joseph, and this was a great happiness and delight to him. He called the name of the first-born Manasseh, which means "forgetting;" for God, he said, has made me to forget all my troubles and sorrows.

And his second son he called Ephraim, which means "fruitfulness;" for, he said,

JOSEPH PROCLAIMED RULER OF EGYPT.

God has greatly blessed me in the land of my affliction.

The seven years of great plenty were at an end, and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. The dearth, or scarceness of food, was not in the land of Egypt only, but in all the surrounding countries also; yet it was only in Egypt that there was corn for making bread.

A Great Famine.

The people had nothing to eat, so they went to Pharaoh, and cried to him for bread—they told him they were starving. And Pharaoh said to all the people of Egypt, Go to Joseph, and whatever he says to you, do.

Then the people took their money to Joseph, and he opened the storehouses, and sold corn to all the Egyptians. And the famine was very grievous. People also came from other countries to buy corn, because the famine was so sore.

What do you think was happening in the land of Canaan all this time—in the land where Jacob lived? The famine was there too; and the sons of Jacob were in great distress about it. They did not know what to do, or where they should go for food; and they were afraid that their wives and their little children would all be starved to death.

But Jacob said to his sons one day, Why do you look one upon another? Why do you stand still doing nothing? Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt! Get you down to that country, and buy food for us, that we may live, and not die.

So it was decided that Joseph's ten brothers should go down to Egypt to buy corn. But Jacob would not let Benjamin, his youngest son, go down with them, for he said, Perhaps some harm might befall him.

When his brothers arrived before Joseph, they did not know him. They never once thought that this was the brother they had sold, more than twenty years before, for twenty pieces of silver.

He was only a young lad then. Now they saw before them a very handsome man, with his hair cut and arranged in the peculiar way that the Egyptians were accustomed to wear it. He was also dressed like an Egyptian, and he was called by another name, which the king had given him, to make the people forget that he had come from another country, and was not really an Egyptian. Besides all this, he was the lord of the land; so no wonder they did not know him.

But Joseph knew them in a moment! Yet he would not tell them who he was, for he wanted to prove them, and to see whether they were better men than they were when he was at home with them. So when his ten brothers bowed down very humbly before him, with their faces to the earth, he spoke roughly to them, and said, Where do you come from? And they answered, From the land of Canaan, to buy food.

The Brothers Tell Who They Are.

As Joseph saw them bowing down before him, he must have remembered the dream which he had dreamed as a boy, and how angry they were with him when he told them about it. He thought that they were all binding sheaves in the field, and that his sheaf stood upright, while theirs bowed down to his sheaf. Now the dream had come true. But Joseph still went on speaking roughly to them, and pretending not to know them. He said, You are spies; you have come from our enemies, to see how poor the land is, and what harm you can do us.

And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are your servants come. We are all the sons of one man; we are true

men: your servants are no spies. Joseph pretended not to believe them. He said, Nay, but you are come to see how poor and starved the land is.

Then the ten brothers thought that if they were to tell this great lord who they were, he would be more likely to believe them. So they said, Your servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

And Joseph said unto them, Now I shall see whether you are spies, or if you are true men. By the life of Pharaoh you shall not go away from here, except your youngest brother come down. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother; and all the rest of you shall be kept in prison till he comes. By this I shall know whether you are speaking the truth, or whether you are spies.

In Great Distress.

When Joseph had said this, he ordered them all to be taken to prison; and he kept them there for three days.

On the third day, Joseph had his ten brothers brought before him, and he said to them, This is what you must do, and then you shall live; for I fear God. If you are true men, then let one of your brethren be bound in the prison; and all the rest may go back to your country, and carry corn for the famine of your houses. But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be proved to be true, and you shall not die.

When the men heard this they were greatly distressed. They could not bear the thought of leaving one of their number behind, in an Egyptian prison, while they returned to Canaan; and besides this, they doubted very much if they would be able to persuade their father to let them bring Benjamin down. And now, in their trouble and sorrow, they remembered again the wicked deed they had done, more than twenty years before, and they said one to another, We are indeed guilty about our brother Joseph, because we saw the anguish of his soul when he begged us to spare him; and we would not hear. It is because of what we did then that all this distress is come upon us now.

And Reuben answered them, saying, Did I not speak to you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and you would not hear? And now God is punishing us for it.

The brothers did not know that Joseph could understand them; for they had been speaking in Hebrew, and he had been speaking to them in the language of Egypt, and had made a man, called an interpreter, explain to them what he had said. But when he heard their words—when he heard them speak in the familiar language of his dear old home—and when he found that they were sorry for their wickedness, his heart was so much touched that he could not keep back his tears. He turned away from them and wept.

Money in the Sacks.

He did not wish to make them unhappy, but he was determined to find out if Benjamin were safe. So presently he went back to them again, and talked with them a little. Then he took Simeon from them, and bound him before their eyes.

Before the brothers set out on their homeward way again, Joseph told some of his servants to fill their sacks with corn, and secretly to put back into each man's sack the money which each of them had brought to pay for the corn. He also gave them plenty of food to eat while on their journey. Thus did he unto them. Then the men put their sacks upon their asses, and departed.

It was with very heavy hearts that they journeyed back to Canaan again. They had bad news to take to their poor old father; and they had already saddened his life so much, that it was a great distress to them to think that the tidings they would bring would cause him more sorrow.

As they journeyed on they came to an inn, and there they stopped for a time to rest. And as one of them opened his sack, to his great surprise he saw his money there, for it was in the sack, lying on the top of the corn. He said to his brothers, My money is given back; and, lo, it is even in my sack. And they were greatly afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God has done unto us?

At last they came unto Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened to them, saying, The man who is the lord of the land spoke very roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country And we said unto him, We are true men we are no spies. We be twelve brethren, sons of our father: one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, This is the way that I shall know that you are true men: leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone; and bring your youngest brother unto me: then I shall know that you are no spies, but that you are true men. So will I give your brother back to you again, and you shall buy and sell in the land.

Jacob's Grief.

These were very sad tidings for poor old Jacob. Simeon was a prisoner in Egypt; and he would not be set free till Benjamin should be sent down. When they had finished telling him everything they began to empty their sacks, and to put away the corn which was so scarce and so precious into some safe place. And, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack, and when they saw it, both they and their father were very much afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, You have bereaved me of my children. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.

Then Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Kill my two sons, if I do not bring Benjamin back to you safely. Deliver him into my hands, and I will bring him back to you again.

My son shall not go down with you, Jacob said; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which you go, then you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

CHAPTER VI.

B. C. 1600.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN IN EGYPT—THE FEAST IN THE PALACE—STORY OF BENJAMIN—THE CUP IN THE SACK—THE PLEA OF JUDAH—JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN—JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT—A HOME IN A FAR COUNTRY—THE BLESSING OF JOSEPH'S TWO SONS—JACOB'S DEATH AND BURIAL—LAST DAYS OF JOSEPH.

THE famine was still sore in the land of Canaan, as well as in Egypt and in many other countries; and with all their care, the corn that Joseph's brothers had brought out of Egypt could not last long. After a time it was all eaten up, and they were again in danger of starving unless they could go down to Egypt to buy more. But they knew it was useless to go unless they took Benjamin with them. At last their father Jacob said to them, Go again, buy us a little food.

And Judah said to his father, The man did very solemnly declare to us that we should not see his face except our brother be with us. If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food for you. But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, You shall not see my face except your brother be with you.

So their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this. Take some of the best fruits of the land, and carry down a present to the man. Take a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds. And take double money in your hand: and the money that you found in your sacks, take it all back again; perhaps it was by some mistake—some oversight—that it was returned. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

At last they were all ready to start. They took Benjamin, and kissed their father, and their wives and little children, and bidding them all good-bye, they went down into Egypt.

Once again they stood before Joseph. They went, as before, to the place where he was selling the corn; and when Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, his heart went out in great love to his young brother, and he longed to put his arms round his neck. But he would not speak to any of them yet; he wanted to prove his brothers still further. Besides, this was the time for serving out the corn to the people; and as Joseph was always faithful in doing his duty, and attending to his business, he still went on with his work, and would not leave off till noon, when he would go home to dinner.

But Joseph spoke to his chief servant or

JOSEPH MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

steward, who managed his house, and said to him, Bring these men home, and make a feast for them; for they shall dine with me to-day. And the steward did as Joseph commanded him, and he brought the men into Joseph's house.

Do you think they were pleased at being taken into that grand house? No; they were very much afraid. When they remembered how roughly the lord of Egypt had spoken to them before, and when they remembered that their brother Simeon was still shut up in prison, they could not feel safe or at their ease. They said to each other, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in here. It was put there on purpose, that the man might find an excuse for taking away our asses, and for making us his slaves.

A Present for Joseph.

They were so frightened and unhappy about it that they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and talked with him at the door of the house. And the man said to Joseph's brothers, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money.

Joseph came at last; and when they saw him, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And Joseph spoke kindly to them, and asked them how they were, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he yet alive?

And they answered, Your servant our father is in good health; he is yet alive.

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother of whom you told me? He could not refrain from blessing Benjamin, for he loved him so much. He said, God be gracious to you, my son.

Joseph in Tears.

When Joseph said that, he was obliged to hurry quickly out of the room. He wanted some quiet place where he could weep by himself without being seen; so he entered into his chamber, and wept there. In a little while he went back to his brothers again. He made a great effort not to give way to tears any more, but to be cheerful; and he ordered his servants to get the dinner ready. Set on bread, he said.

So the servants spread the feast. Joseph sat at a table by himself, as he was always accustomed to do. And the Egyptians who were with him sat at another table by themselves; for they would have thought it a dreadful thing to eat bread at the same table at which a Hebrew was sitting, even though he was the governor over all that land.

At a third table Joseph's brothers were placed. Joseph made them all sit down in proper order before him. The first-born, Reuben, first; then Simeon; next to him Levi; and all the others according to their ages; and Benjamin last of all. The men wondered how it was that this lord of Egypt could tell about their ages.

It was a happy party in that room that day. Joseph's brothers had lost all their fear of the ruler of the land, when they found how kind he was to them. And they enjoyed the feast too. For this was a time of grievous famine, and they had often of late not had even enough to eat; and it had been a very long time since they had seen such plenty, and had sat down to such a feast as this.

It is often the custom in Eastern countries

for the giver of a feast to send some of the nicest dishes, which are before himself, to the guest whom he wishes most to honor, or of whom he is most fond; and sometimes he chooses some dainty morsels out of the dishes to put upon his friend's plate. Just in this way Joseph sent nice things from his table to his brothers. But to Benjamin he sent five times as much as to any of the others. He showed plainly that Benjamin was his favorite.

It did not at all displease the others that the lord of Egypt should like Benjamin best; so they ate and drank, and were merry with him. As Joseph watched them he must have seen that they were not jealous of Benjamin's larger portion, as they had been, years before, of his own coat of many colors.

The Cup in the Sack.

The day after that feast in Joseph's house the eleven brothers were to return home. But before they left, Joseph commanded his steward, who had the charge of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry; and put every man's money in his sack again. And put my cup—the silver cup out of which I always drink—in the sack of the youngest, and his corn money also. And the steward did everything exactly as he had been told.

Can you guess why Joseph had ordered his silver cup to be put in Benjamin's sack? He wanted to find out if the brothers would take Benjamin's part when they should see him in trouble and difficulty. He also wanted to see if their hearts were as hard and unfeeling towards his dear old father as they were when they sold him to the Ishmaelites.

As soon as the morning was light the men were sent away laden with corn. No doubt they felt very thankful and happy at being on their homeward way again, with all their number complete—Simeon restored to them, and not one left behind this time.

When they were gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, Go quickly after the men, and when you have overtaken them, say unto them Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my master's cup? It is very wrong of you to have done this.

So the steward ran after Joseph's brothers, and very soon came up with them. Then he spoke to them, just as Joseph had desired him to do.

The Cup Found.

The brothers were greatly distressed to think that Joseph could have supposed they would act so ungratefully and wickedly. They knew they were innocent, and so they said, Why does my lord say such words? God forbid that your servants should do such a thing! You remember that when we found the money returned in our sacks we brought it again to you out of the land of Canaan; so do you think we should steal out of your lord's house either silver or gold? If you can find the silver cup with any one of us, then let that person die; and all the rest of us will be slaves to my lord.

And the steward answered, No, you shall not all be slaves; only he with whom the cup is found shall be my servant.

The brothers felt so sure that no cup would be found amongst their things, that as quickly as possible they untied their sacks and put them on the ground and opened them. And the steward began to search in every sack. He examined Reuben's first, and all the others afterwards in regular order; till last of all he looked in Benjamin's sack, and there the cup was found.

It was a terrible shock to all the brothers—a bitter sorrow and surprise. They tore

THE CUP FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK.

their clothes in sign of great sorrow, and returned to the city.

And Joseph said unto them, What thing is this that you have done? Did you not know that I should be certain to find out your wickedness?

Then Judah spoke. It was he who had promised his father to take care of Benjamin, and to bring him back safely or else to bear the blame for ever. So now he sorrowfully answered, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. He is punishing us for our sins. Behold, we have come back to be your slaves, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

And Joseph said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose sack the cup was found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, go back in peace unto your father.

Then Judah said, Now therefore, I pray you, let me remain here and be a bondman to my lord, instead of the lad; and let the lad go home again with his brothers. For how could I go up to my father if the lad be not with me? I could not bear to see his great sorrow, for I think he would die of grief.

Joseph Tells Who He Is.

At Judah's words Joseph could no longer refrain himself before all those who stood by him, for many people were in the room besides Joseph's brothers. He cried out, Let every one go out of the room.

So all the Egyptians left the room, and no one was there when Joseph made himself known to his brethren. He had yearned over them with exceeding tenderness even while he was appearing to treat them harshly, yet it was but to try whether they were really sorry for the sins of former years.

Joseph could not keep back his tears when he made himself known to his brethren. He wept aloud—so loud that all the Egyptians who were in the house heard him. And Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph; does my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were terrified at his presence.

He saw how much afraid they were, and that because of their great surprise and fear they had not a word to say; so he spoke to them most lovingly. Come near to me, I pray you, he said. And they came near. Then he said to them, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me; for it was God's doing. He sent me before you to preserve life, that people should not die of starvation. For these two years has the famine been in the land, and yet there are five more years to come, during which there shall be no ploughing nor harvest, for no corn will grow. And God sent me before you to save food, that your lives might be saved by a great deliverance.

Jacob Receives Good News.

Make haste, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, do not delay. And you shall dwell in the land of Goshen; and you shall be near unto me, you and your children, and your children's children, and your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. And I will take care of you there, and will feed you, lest you and your household and all that you have become very poor, for there are yet five years more of famine.

Once more the sons of Jacob are on their way from the land of Egypt to return to their father's house. A strange joy and thankfulness are in their hearts; for Joseph

is not dead nor pining away in cruel slavery, and they have glad tidings to take back to their patient, sorrowful father. We may be sure they made all the haste they could, and journeyed as fast as they were able to go, till they came into the land of Canaan, and reached their father's house. Then they said to him, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.

And the heart of Jacob fainted. The sudden news brought him no comfort, but only revived again more keenly the memory of his great loss; for he did not believe what his sons said. It seemed too good to be true.

Then they told him all the words of Joseph, and gave him all the loving messages he had sent. And when Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. And he said, It is enough—I believe it now; Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die. He and his sons made every preparation for their departure as quickly as possible, and then, taking everything that belonged to them, they left the vale of Hebron, where they had lived for so many years.

They had not gone very far when they

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

came to Beer-sheba, which was on their way to Egypt. Here it was that Jacob's father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah, had lived so long; and Israel rested here that night, and offered sacrifice unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he answered, Here am I.

And he said, I am God, the God of your father. Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt; and I will also surely bring you up again. And Joseph shall put his hands upon your eyes.

Then Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba. And the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry them. And they took their cattle and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt; Jacob, and all his family with him. It was a large party—nearly seventy persons—for there were his sons, and his sons' sons with him, and his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his household. So they came at last into Egypt.

Joseph Hastens to Meet his Father.

Goshen was the name of the place to which they had come, and where Joseph had said that their home was to be. As soon, therefore, as they had arrived, Jacob sent Judah to Joseph to tell him they were come.

As soon as Joseph heard the good news, he ordered his chariot to be got ready at once; for he was in great haste to see his dear old father. It was not long before Joseph reached the land of Goshen where his father was, and presented himself before him. And Joseph fell on his father's neck and kissed him, and he wept on his neck a good while.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen your face. I am content not to live any longer, because you are yet alive.

Now Joseph had to be very careful not to make the Egyptians jealous or angry, by his bringing down such a large number of his family into their famine-stricken country He knew the king would welcome them; but he feared the people might not be pleased. So Joseph said unto his brethren, and to all his father's house, I will go to Pharaoh, and will speak unto him and say, My brethren and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me. And the men are shepherds, for it has always been their business to take care of cattle; and they have brought their flocks and their herds, and all that they have.

Then Joseph explained to his brothers that the Egyptians did not like shepherds at all. They were partly afraid of them for one reason; for some warlike shepherds had once come into their country, and had fought against them, and burned their cities, killing the men, and taking the women and children to be slaves. Besides this, the Egyptians had a great dislike to and contempt for people who lived in tents, and who led a wandering life. For most of the shepherds in that part of the world were obliged to wander about from place to place, to find pasture-land enough to feed their cattle.

Pharaoh Welcomes Jacob.

And Joseph said to his brethren, Pharaoh is sure to call for you; and it shall come to pass when he shall ask, What is your occupation? that you shall say, Your servants' trade has been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers. Then he will let you dwell in the land of Goshen: for every shepherd

is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

After this, Joseph brought in Jacob, his father, and set him before Pharaoh. And now, when Israel, halting upon his thigh (or walking lame, as we say), was brought into the king's presence, he lifted up his hands and blessed the king; for he could not forget what great kindness his darling son had received at his hands.

They Settle in Goshen.

And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old are you? And Jacob answered and said unto the king, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been. I have had much trouble and sorrow, and I have not lived as long as my fathers have done; they were much older than I am when they ended the years of their pilgrimage.

When Jacob had spoken to the king, and told him in those few sad words how full of trial and grief his life had been, he blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.

And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, even in Goshen, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph took care of his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household; and he gave them bread enough for all their families, and for their little ones.

Many years passed away, and Jacob was still living peacefully in the midst of his family in the land of Goshen. And God blessed him and his sons, so they had great riches; and they grew and increased in number exceedingly. And Jacob lived in Goshen, in the land of Egypt, seventeen years.

But the time was drawing very near now when he must die. He felt that he had not long to live, and he was quite ready for his pilgrimage to end; but he could not bear the thought of being buried in Egypt. Canaan, the land of promise, was very dear to him; and there it was he wished his body to lie.

So he sent for his son Joseph, and said to him, If now I have found grace in your sight, make me a solemn promise, I pray you, and deal kindly and truly with me. Bury me not, I pray you, in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers in the cave of Machpelah in the land of Canaan; and you shall carry me out of Egypt, and shall bury me in their burying-place.

And Joseph answered, I will do as you have said. Soon after this Jacob became very ill; and some one told Joseph, saying, Behold, your father is sick.

Joseph's Two Sons.

When Joseph heard this he took his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and left his home at once to go to his father in Goshen. Then they told Jacob, saying, Behold, your son Joseph is come to see you.

Now the eyes of Jacob were dim for age, so that he could not see; but he knew that others were in the room with him besides Joseph. Perhaps he had remarked the sound of strange footsteps when Ephraim and Manasseh came in with their father, for Jacob asked, Who are these?

And Joseph said unto his father, They are my two sons, whom God has given me in this place.

And Jacob said, Bring them, I pray you, unto me, and I will bless them.

And Joseph brought them near to hi father, who kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see your face again; and, lo, God has shown me your children also.

Then Joseph took away his sons from

their dying grandfather's loving embrace, and he bowed himself before his father, with his face to the earth.

But now the blessing was to be given, and Israel was to lay his hands upon the heads of the two lads. So Joseph took them both, and placed them before his father in such a manner that Jacob's right hand might rest on the head of Manasseh, and his left on the head of Ephraim; for he wished the best blessing to be for Manasseh, his first-born.

His Hands Were Crossed.

Though Jacob could not see, yet he knew what Joseph had done. He did not do, however, as Joseph wished; for he crossed his hands, and placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim, the younger son, and his left hand on Manasseh's head.

And he blessed them, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, Not so, my father, for this is the first-born; put your right hand upon his head.

But his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it. Manasseh also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his family shall become a multitude of nations.

Thus Israel blessed the two sons of Joseph that day; and he said to them, In the time to come, when people shall give a blessing to those to whom they wish well, they shall say, God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh; for you shall be rich and prosperous.

Jacob's Dying Words.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and shall bring you again into the land of your fathers.

And Jacob called his sons unto him, and said, Gather yourselves together, even all of you, that I may tell you that which shall happen to you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, you sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father.

So Jacob's twelve sons came as he desired them to do, and gathered round his bed to hear his dying words.

He spoke of each of his sons, beginning with Reuben his first-born; and they all stood silently round him, listening very intently to his last words. He spoke of their faults too. He said that Reuben had lost the right of the eldest born, because he had been very wicked, and because his character was weak and uncertain. He strongly blamed Simeon and Levi for their cruelty in Shechem, and said that their families should suffer for that evil act, and should not be as strong and great as they otherwise would have been, but that they should be divided and scattered.

But of Judah he prophesied great things. He said, Judah, you are he whom your brethren shall praise. There was much that was very noble in the character of Judah, as we have seen; and Jacob said that he should be a great chief among his brethren, and that his father's children should bow down before him. Moreover, it was of the family of Judah that the Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, should be born; so his tribe was honored far beyond all others.

And to Joseph, or rather to his two sons, was given the birthright that Reuben had

lost by his sinful folly. For Jacob had said, Your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

To each of his twelve sons, by turn, Jacob told what should befall him in the far-off years. And after he had done that, he blessed them all; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

And he charged them, and said unto them, I am going to die: Bury me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought for a possession of a burial-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons—when he had explained to them all that he wanted them to do—he gathered up his feet into the bed, and died.

THE SONS OF JACOB BURYING THEIR FATHER.

Then Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father's body.

The Egyptians had a way of preserving

bodies from decay. They used certain drugs and gums and spices, and used them so skillfully that to this day there are Egyptian mummies to be seen which are more than three thousand years old. An embalmed body is called a mummy.

So the physicians, whose special duty it was to attend to this work, embalmed the dead body of the aged Israel. And his sons, and the Egyptians also, mourned for him seventy days.

But Joseph had not forgotten the promise he had made to his dear old father. He had not forgotten how eagerly he had desired to be buried in the cave of Machpelah; and Joseph was very anxious to carry out his wishes as soon as possible, yet he would not go without the king's permission.

The King Allows Him to Go.

So when the seventy days were past Joseph spoke unto the house of Pharaoh (that means to the king's family, or to the chief persons in his household), saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me make him a very solemn promise; for he said to me, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for myself in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray you, and bury my father, and I will come back again.

And Pharaoh said, Go up and bury your father, according as he made you swear.

Why did not Joseph speak directly to the king himself, as he had always done before? Why did he now, for the first time, make his request to Pharaoh through some of the king's family?

This was the reason. Joseph was accustomed to dress and to wear his hair in the same way that the Egyptians did. They always shaved off the beard and all the hair that grew on their faces. But when they were in mourning for a relative, they were obliged to let the hair grow on their faces again; for they were not allowed to shave then. Now it was not considered respectful or proper for the Egyptians to appear before their king unshaved; so Joseph would not venture before him till all the mourning was ended, and till he might shave the hair off his face as before.

As soon as Pharaoh had given Joseph leave to go, he went up to bury his father. And with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders (or chief persons) of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt. All the house of Joseph went too, and all his brethren, and his father's house; only their little ones, and their flocks and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with Joseph both chariots and horsemen—an armed guard to watch over them in case they should meet with dangers on the road—and it was a very great company.

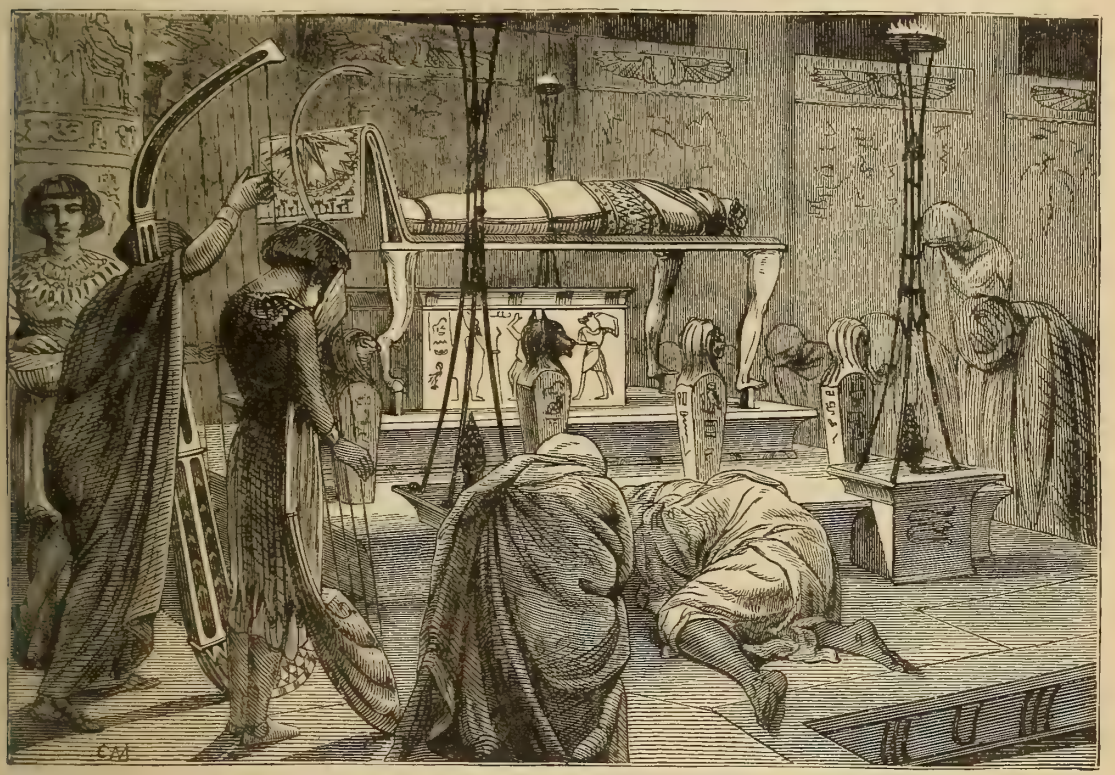
The Funeral March to Canaan.

There were Egyptian warriors, officers of the king, gentlemen of the court, and men of the highest rank in the land of Egypt, all doing honor to the memory of Jacob by accompanying his sons and grandsons on their funeral march to Canaan.

They came at last to the promised land, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation. For seven days they mourned and wept, because the great shepherd chief was dead. And the people of Canaan looked on in wonder. Seventeen years before, they had seen Jacob setting off in Egyptian wagons, with all his sons, and all his possessions, to go and live in the land of Goshen; now his dead body was brought back with much love, and great honor, to be

buried with his father and his grandfather.

Then the sons of Israel buried their father in the land of Canaan, as he had commanded them. When this solemn duty was done, Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all those who went up with him to bury his father. But Joseph's brothers were not at ease. They were afraid, now their father was dead, that Joseph would



EMBALMING THE BODY OF JOSEPH.

revenge himself upon them for all their cruelty and unkindness to him when he was a boy.

They said, Joseph will hate us, and he will certainly punish us for all the evil which we did unto him.

So they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Your father did command us before he died, saying, So shall you say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray you now, the trespass of your brethren, and their sin; for they did unto you evil. And now, we pray you, forgive the sin of the servants of the God of your father.

When Joseph heard this message he wept. His heart was so true, and so tender and loving, that he could not understand how it was that his brothers did not believe in his complete forgiveness. And his brothers went to him, and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are your servants.

And Joseph said unto them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? He meant to say, Do not be afraid of me; only fear God. But as for you, though you thought to do me evil, God meant it for good, that many people might be saved alive during that time of famine. Now therefore fear you not; I will take care of you and of your little ones.

And he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them.

And Joseph lived in Egypt, he and all his father's house. And God blessed him there, and prospered him, and he saw his grandchildren and great-grandchildren growing up around him. But when he was a hundred and ten years old, he said unto his brothers, I am dying; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land into the land which he promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Joseph Buried in Canaan.

And Joseph made the children of Israel promise that when the time should come for them to leave Egypt and return to Canaan, they should not forget to take his dead body with them, and to bury him in the promised land.

God will surely visit you, he said, and you shall carry up my bones from here. So Joseph died. And they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt.

But they did not bury him there. Faithful to their promise, they waited till they should leave the country where they had already lived so long.

They little knew how long it would be before they should see the beautiful land of Canaan. They little thought that bitter sorrow and trouble and slavery were before them, and that the Egyptian people, who were now so kind, would most cruelly oppress them.

But God was very good to them. He never for one moment forgot them, neither did he forget his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When the right time had come, he took them out of the hands of those who were so cruelly ill-using them, and brought them out of the land of Egypt with a strong arm.

The account of the journeyings of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan is a very strange and wonderful story.

When at last, several hundred years after Joseph died, the children of Israel reached the land of Canaan, they buried him in Shechem, in that parcel of ground which Jacob had bought for a hundred pieces of silver, and which he afterwards gave to Joseph as the one portion more than his brothers had received. So the last wish of Joseph was fulfilled, that he should be buried in the land of Canaan.

CHAPTER VII.

B. C. 1571.

THE STORY OF MOSES—THE LITTLE LIFEBOAT—ADOPTED CHILD OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER—CRUEL TREATMENT OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT—MOSES SLAYS AN EGYPTIAN—AT THE BURNING BUSH—AARON'S ROD BECOMES A SERPENT—THE TEN PLAGUES—THE FIRST-BORN OF THE EGYPTIANS SLAIN—FEAST OF THE PASSOVER—THE HEBREWS PASS THROUGH THE RED SEA—PHARAOH AND HIS HOST DROWNED—THE SONG OF TRIUMPH.

WHEN Joseph and all his brothers were dead, and Pharaoh and all the Egyptians who had known them were dead too, then a new king ruled over Egypt. He was also called Pharaoh, for that was a name given to all the kings of Egypt beside their own names. This Pharaoh forgot the good that Joseph had done for the Egyptians, and he did not like to see the families of the children of Israel becoming so large, and living in the best part of Egypt.

When Jacob came from Canaan with his sons, and their wives, and their children, there were seventy people altogether. Now there were thousands and thousands—the families had grown so many and so large.

Pharaoh was jealous of them. He said, I cannot have so many of these Hebrews, or Israelites, in the land. So he set them to very hard work, and treated them most cruelly, for he thought this would make them weak, and then they would die.

But he could not destroy the people in this way, so he tried another plan. He told the nurses who went to help the mothers to take care of their little children, to throw all the boy-babies into the river Nile as soon as they were born. The nurses did not obey this wicked law, but saved all the babies alive that they could.

At this time there lived a good man and his wife, who had one daughter named Miriam, and a little boy three years old, named Aaron. He was born before the king made this cruel law. Then another child was born; it was a little boy. He was such a beautiful baby that the mother said, I cannot throw him into the river.

Hiding the Little Boy.

For three months she took great pains to hide him, so that the Egyptians should not know that she had a little child. At the end of that time she could hide him no longer, for he was bigger and cried louder; and she was sadly afraid that he would be discovered.

What can I do? she said. Must my little babe be thrown into the river? She soon thought what she would do.

There grew upon the banks of the river Nile a large reed or rush called papyrus. This was useful in many ways. A kind of paper was made from it; our word paper comes from papyrus. It was also used for making such things as we make of wicker-work.

The mother thought, I will make a cradle-boat for my baby to lie in when I put him into the river. So she took the leaves of the papyrus, and plaited them into a cradle.

When this little ark or boat was made, she covered it all over on the outside with a kind of pitch, so as to keep the water out. Very to the river, and placed it among the tall rushes which grew on its banks. She dared not stop to watch it herself, but she told her daughter Miriam to stay near the place, and see what became of it.

Soon Miriam saw a lady and her maids coming along. She was a princess, the

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER FINDING MOSES.

likely the mother filled the inside with something soft, and made it as comfortable as she could.

The mother with many tears and prayers lifted the child from her bosom, and laid him in this strange cradle. Then she carried it daughter of Pharaoh the king. As she passed by the river-side, the lady saw something like a tiny boat among the rushes. She told one of her maids to draw it out and bring it to her.

When she opened it, she saw in it a lovely

babe. As she and her maid looked, the child cried. No wonder! for all the faces one; she knew that it was one of the Hebrew children that had been put there, so that it

MOSES BROUGHT BEFORE PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER.

were strange to him, and it was his mother's face that he wanted to see when he awoke.

The princess was sorry for the poor little might not be killed according to her father's order. This beautiful boy shall be my child, she said; I will take care of him.

Just then Miriam came up to the princess; she did not tell her that she was the baby's sister, but she asked, Shall I go and call you a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may take care of the child for you? The princess told her to go.

THE ISRAELITES MADE TO WORK HARD IN EGYPT.

So Miriam went and called the child's mother. When she came, Pharaoh's daughter said, Take this child, and nurse it for me; and I will pay you for your trouble. So the mother took the baby home with her.

Now, she need not be afraid if the Egyptians did see the babe, for they would not harm him. He was to be treated, not as a Hebrew child, but as a young prince; he was to be like a son to Pharaoh's daughter.

When he was old enough, his mother brought him to the princess, and she called his name Moses, because she said, I drew him out of the water. The word Moses means "drawn out."

Moses lived at the court of Pharaoh until he was forty years old. He was taught in all the learning of the Egyptians, as if he

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER FINDING MOSES

were indeed the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and riches and honors were given him.

And now came the time when he must choose between two things, whether he would suffer affliction with his own people or enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. For if he still dwelt in the king's court, he must needs do as they of the court were wont to do, following evil ways, and bowing down to false gods. And because he had faith, believing in the things that were unseen, he chose the hard lot of the people of God rather than all the riches and honors that would have come in due course to the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

But Moses did not forget his brethren the Israelites, who had to make bricks, and build cities, and work very hard indeed for the king. One day he went to look at them, as they were working in the hot sun, bending under their heavy burdens. There was a poor man who had such a great weight to carry that he could not move fast; so the Egyptian taskmaster, who was put over these men to make the work, hit him hard.

This cruel deed vexed Moses. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together, and he said to him that did wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy neighbor? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared,

MOSES SLAYING THE EGYPTIAN.

and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh into the land of Midian and sat down by a well. Now, the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds

MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH.

came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock.

And when they came to Reuel, their father, he said, How is it, that ye are come so soon to-day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us and watered our flock. And he said unto his daughters, Where is he? Why is it, that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses, Zipporah his daughter, to be his wife.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and on a certain occasion he drove his flock into the inner part of the desert, and came to the mountain of God on his way towards Horeb. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed. And Moses said, I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he went forward, He called to him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses. And he answered, Here I am. And he said, Come not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground; I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said to him, I have surely seen the affliction of my people in Egypt and I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land into a good and large land, into a land flowing with milk and honey. Come now therefore, and I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

The Rod Becomes a Serpent.

But Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh? And that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? God answered, Certainly I will be with thee, and thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, hath sent me unto you.

But Moses answered and said, Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared to thee. And the Lord said to him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. And the Lord said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. And the Lord said, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it was turned into a rod again, That they may believe, saith he, that the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob hath appeared unto thee.

And further the Lord said to him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And the Lord said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.

And the Lord said again, If they will not believe these two signs nor hearken to thy voice, then take water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land and it shall become blood.

And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said to him, Who hath made man's mouth, or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say.

In Egypt Again.

Moses however entreated, and God appointed his brother Aaron to be his spokesman. Then Moses took his wife and his sons and returned to the land of Egypt, for God had told him to return and that all the men were dead who sought his life. And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went and met him in the mount of God and kissed him.

And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken, and Moses did the signs in the sight of the people.

And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

After Moses and Aaron had told the Israelites that God would deliver them from the Egyptians, they went to Pharaoh, and said, The Lord God of Israel saith to you, Let my people go that they may serve me. Then Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

Pharaoh, you see, neither knew nor cared anything about the true God; but he, as well as all his people, worshipped many animals—such as bulls, serpents, and crocodiles. As the Egyptians had their false gods that they worshipped, so he thought that the Israelites had their own God, but as he did not own him as the true God, he would not obey his wishes. He found the work that the Israelites did so valuable, that he was not willing to part with them.

He was quite as cruel as that King Pharaoh who ordered all the little boy-babies to be thrown into the river. He made the Israelites to work harder than ever, for he said it was because they were idle that they wanted to go away.

AARON'S ROD CHANGED TO A SERPENT.

He told the taskmasters not to give them any straw to make their bricks, as they used to do; but to let them go and get the straw for themselves, and they were to make just as many bricks every day as they had done before they had to find the straw.

So the poor people went looking about for straw, and the taskmasters said to them,

Come, make haste; finish your daily tasks! But they could not finish them; so the task-masters beat them.

When they complained to Pharaoh, he only said, You are idle, you are idle! God, however, saw their trouble and sorrow, and heard their groaning.

He said to Moses and Aaron, Go again to Pharaoh, and take your rod with you. Throw it down before the king, and it shall become a serpent. Then Moses and Aaron did so.

When Pharaoh saw the rod changed into a serpent, he said, My wise men can do the same. He called them, and they threw down their rods, and they became serpents too; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

Story of the Plagues.

The next day Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and said, The Lord God of the Hebrews says, that if you will not let his people go, he will send terrible plagues over your land.

Pharaoh did not heed; so God sent the first terrible trouble, or plague, upon Egypt. God said to Moses, Tell Aaron to stretch his rod over the river Nile, and over all the streams and ponds, and the water shall be changed into blood.

And Aaron did so; and all the waters were turned into blood, and all the fishes in the river died; and instead of water there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. This plague lasted seven days. At the end of that time, God said that he would bring another plague upon the land of Egypt, if Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go.

Pharaoh did not heed; so God told Moses to say to Aaron, Stretch forth your rod over the rivers, the streams, and the ponds, and cause frogs to come up out of them, and cover the land. This was the second plague.

When Aaron did so, the frogs came up and went everywhere. All places were full of them: not only out-of-doors, but in-doors too. They were even in their bedrooms and their beds, in their ovens, and in places where they kept their food.

This was so unpleasant, that Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron, Pray to your God to take away the frogs, and I will let your people go. So they asked God to take away the frogs and God made them die out of all the houses and the fields; and the Egyptians put them together in heaps.

Lice and Flies.

When this trouble was over, Pharaoh would not keep his promise to let the Israelites go, so God sent the third plague. Aaron stretched out his rod over the dust of the land, and it became lice. These creeping insects came upon all the Egyptians, and upon their beasts too. Still, Pharaoh was not sorry.

Then God sent a fourth plague—a grievous swarm of flies, so that the whole land was corrupted because of them. Pharaoh now said to Moses and Aaron, Ask God to take away the flies, and I will let the people go for a little way into the wilderness, to worship God.

And Moses prayed to God, and God took away the flies; but neither at this time also would Pharaoh let the people go.

Then God sent the fifth plague, which was a murrain, or fearful disease among the cattle, so that a great many horses, and asses, and camels, and oxen, and sheep died. But only those belonging to the Egyptians died. God took care of the cattle of the Israelites, and they did not lose one.

Still Pharaoh heeded not, so God sent the sixth plague. This was very sore pimples or boils, which came upon man and beast,

and which caused great burning pain. Even after this Pharaoh still was self-willed, and would not obey God's command. So God sent Moses and Aaron to tell him that the next day he would send a dreadful tempest of thunder and lightning, and hail, and rain. So fetch in all your servants and cattle out of the fields, lest the hail kill them.

Then those Egyptians who feared God brought their servants and cattle in; but those who did not care for what God said, left them to stay out in the fields.

A Frightful Hail-storm.

The next morning, God sent a terrible hail-storm. This was the seventh plague. It thundered very loud and long, and the lightning was like fire running along the ground. It was an awful sight, and the large stones of hail knocked down and killed all the men and beasts who were in the fields. The trees were bent, and many were broken in this fearful storm, and the barley, and the flax, and many green herbs besides, were torn to pieces by its fury. But there was no storm in the land of Goshen.

Pharaoh was frightened at the loud long thunderings, and at the fierce lightning, so seldom heard and seen in Egypt; and he said to Moses, Pray to God for me, it is enough, for I will let you go and ye shall stay no longer. And Moses did so, but when Pharaoh saw that the danger was passed, that it thundered no more, and that the hail ceased, then he said, I will not let the people go.

Ground Covered with Locusts.

Now God sent the eighth plague. He made a strong east wind blow, which brought locusts in such large numbers that no one could see the ground, it was so covered by them. This was a dreadful plague.

A locust is an insect something like a grasshopper, only very much larger. These insects soon eat up all that is green. They will come in large flocks, hiding the light of the sun like a thick cloud, as they fly along. When the locusts settle, they very soon eat up every blade of grass, all the leaves and young shoots off the trees, and everything else in the way of fruits and vegetables. When they fly away again, the country looks brown, as if it was burnt with fire; for all the grass is eaten, and the trees look bare as they do in winter, for every leaf is gone.

Now God sent to the Egyptians these locusts, larger than they had ever seen before, and in such vast numbers too that the whole ground looked dark with them. They soon ate up everything that the hail had left, all the herbs, all the fruit; and there remained not any green thing throughout all the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron in great haste, and said, I have sinned against the Lord and against you; forgive me I pray this once, and ask God to take away this great evil.

Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh's presence, and prayed to God to take away the locusts. And God sent a strong west wind, which blew the locusts into the Red Sea, where they died; there was not one left in all the land.

Darkness that Could be Felt.

But this sorrow of Pharaoh was only pretence; he was sorry to have the locusts, but he was not sorry for his cruelty, nor for his sin in breaking his promise; and again he said, I will not let the people go.

Then God sent the ninth plague. For three days and nights he covered the whole land of Egypt with a thick darkness; it seemed as if they could feel it, it was so thick.

Their lamps gave no light, and for three days they could not see each other. No one moved from his place, no one could work all that while; every one was too frightened to do anything.

The Israelites had light in all their dwellings, which showed the Egyptians most plainly that the darkness was sent as a punishment to them for their cruelty to God's people.

Pharaoh now was willing to let the people go; but he said, You shall not take your herds with you. Moses said, When they went they must take all that they had. Then was Pharaoh very angry, and he would not let them go.

Now God sent a tenth plague over the land of Egypt. Nine fearful plagues had already swept over the land of Egypt, and Pharaoh was still obstinate and self-willed. But the time was now coming for him to obey the command of God, and to let the Israelites go.

The First-born Slain.

In the middle of the night the tenth awful trouble came, for in that hour of stillness and of darkness, God smote all the first-born of the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of the cattle.

Every Egyptian household was awaked from its sleep to see the dying pain of its best beloved one, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. An exceedingly great and bitter cry of fear and grief was heard throughout all the land of Egypt—all were mourning for their slain ones.

They could not see the hand that dealt the blow, but they knew that it was given by the God of the Israelites, for their many cruelties to his people.

In great alarm, in the middle of the night, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Rise up, and go away out of my land, you and the Israelites. Go and serve the Lord as you said. Take your flocks and herds and be gone, and bless me also.

The proud king was so much humbled now, that he asked them to bless him. He begged that he might not be under the wrath of that mighty God, whose power was so great, whose displeasure was so terrible. The Egyptians, too, prayed the Israelites to make haste and go away; or, they said, We shall all be dead men. They willingly gave them all that they wanted, and all that they asked for, so anxious were they to have them go.

Getting Ready to Go.

But how could the Israelites leave the land of Egypt at such a short notice, and in the middle of the night too? They were all ready to do so, though it was in the middle of the night. While every household in Egypt was awake, mourning for its dead, every household in Israel was awake keeping a feast.

Moses had told them to prepare for the journey, for on that very night God would make Pharaoh consent to let them go.

God had said, Tell them, I will pass through the land of Egypt, about midnight, and all the first-born, both of man and beast, in the land of Egypt shall die; but I will pass over your houses and not smite your first-born. You must kill a lamb and sprinkle its blood on your doorposts: then, when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not destroy you. You must all of you stay in-doors that night and eat a feast, while the Lord is passing through the land to destroy the Egyptians, This feast is to be called the feast of the Passover. You must keep it every year as the day comes

round, and you must eat it then as you will eat it to-night.

Then God told them to take the lamb, whose blood they had sprinkled on the door-posts, and to roast it whole. Each family

THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

was to have its Passover lamb. It was to be a lamb without disease or fault of any kind. After they had eaten as much as they required, they were to save none of it till morning, but burn with fire what was left. This was because meat in a hot country like Egypt soon turns bad, and it is not proper that part of a sacrifice to God should be spoiled and become corrupt.

The lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs; first of all to remind them of the heavy and bitter bondage that they had suffered in Egypt. It was to teach them, too, that sin corrupts and spreads like leaven, and that, like the bitter herb, it is a bitter and an evil thing.

They were to eat it with their girdles

DEPARTURE OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT.

tightened round their waists, with their shoes on their feet, with their staves in their hands, and to eat it in haste, so as to be ready at a moment's notice when the order came to start on their journey.

While the Israelites were thus eating that Passover feast, the order came for them all at once to leave the land of Egypt, where they had lived so many years. They were quite ready to go; not one moment did they wait; and the Egyptians, who before were so anxious to keep them, now almost thrust them out of their land.

This going out of the Israelites from Egypt is called the Exodus—the word "exodus" means departure.

A Vast Multitude.

How many Israelites were there, do you think, who left Egypt under Moses? It is supposed about three millions of men, women, and children. If you counted a thousand every day, you would be more than eight years counting this great multitude.

When Jacob came from Canaan to settle in Egypt, his sons, and daughters, and grandchildren, were but seventy persons altogether; now, notwithstanding their hard bondage, they had increased to this large number.

God showed them the way out of Egypt. He went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. The cloudy pillar sheltered them from the hot rays of the sun by day, and the fiery pillar gave them light by night. After they had journeyed for three days, they came to the borders of the Red Sea, and there they encamped, or set up their tents, and rested.

By this time Pharaoh and his servants said, Why did we let the Israelites go from serving us? What shall we do without their labor? Let us go and make them come back to their work. Then Pharaoh gave orders to his servants to get ready the war chariots, for he said, I and my soldiers will go after the Israelites and bring them back.

So they made ready all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and overtook the Israelites as they were encamped by the sea. Great was the terror of the Israelites as they saw these armed men coming towards them. They had no arms themselves, so they could not fight them. They were shut in by the mountains on the one side, and by the Red Sea on the other, so they could not run away from them. There seemed no way in which they could get out of their hands.

Overtaken by the Egyptians.

In their distress they cried to God and he heard them. He said, You can do nothing, you need do nothing; I will do all. Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of God; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see again no more for ever.

It was about evening when the Egyptians overtook the Israelites. They felt so sure that they could not get away from them, that they pitched their tents near to the place where the Israelites were encamped, and waited till morning meaning then to drive them back again to their slavery in Egypt.

The Israelites were trembling with fear, when all at once they saw their pillar of fire move through the air and come between them and the Egyptians. Now it was a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud both at once. To them it was a pillar of fire giving them light, but to the Egyptians it was a pillar of cloud, covering them with darkness. The Egyptians could not see the camp of the Israelites all night, for the thick cloud hid them from their sight. Still they thought that they were safe in their power; they

could not climb the mountains, they could not walk over the sea.

Now, what happened? Moses, at the command of God, stretched out his rod over the waters of the Red Sea, and they divided, and the sea was like a wall on the right hand and on the left. Then a strong east wind began to blow, which dried up a pathway for them through the sea. Now, Moses said, Go forward; so this vast host began its journey through this wonderful road to the land on the opposite side. It is supposed that the sea was eight miles wide in that part where the Israelites crossed. It was not until morning when the Israelites had nearly all reached the further side, that the Egyptians became aware of what had taken place.

Then they came to the spot where they thought the Israelites were staying, and they found them gone. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

PHARAOH'S HOST DESTROYED IN THE RED SEA.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon

their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the the Lord, and his servant Moses.

So obstinate. self-willed Pharaoh, who was bent on having his own way, found it was of no use to strive against what it was right for him to do. He found the truth of the words, He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

The Israelites were full of gratitude as they looked at the dead bodies of their enemies now lying up the sea-shore. Now they could hurt them no more; they need never fear the Egyptian again. They might well feel that it was a great work that the Lord had done for them. The news of this mighty deliverance spread abroad into the distant countries through which they had to pass, and other nations feared to injure a people who were so clearly under the special care of God.

Moses and the Israelites sang a song of thanks to God for helping them in this time of great need. It was all about God's goodness: it began and ended with, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

B. C. 1491.

FROM THE RED SEA TO SINAI—THE BITTER WATERS MADE SWEET—BREAD FROM HEAVEN—A FLOCK OF QUAILS—WATER FROM THE ROCK IN HOREB—BATTLE WITH THE AMALEKITES—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS SPOKEN FROM SINAI—STORY OF THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICES—THE SCAPEGOAT SENT INTO THE WILDERNESS.

HAVING left the spot at which they crossed the Red Sea, the Israelites went into the desert southward, towards Horeb. This was not the direct way to Canaan—the land promised by God to Abraham and to his children; but first of all, before going there, the Israelites were to visit the place where Moses saw the burning bush. There they were to worship God, and he would then direct them what to do next.

For three weary days they travelled on, but they came to no well of water. That which they had brought with them from their last resting-place was all gone, and now they were ready to die of thirst.

In this cold country we do not know what it is to suffer from thirst as those do who live in hot countries where water is scarce. For three days the Israelites had toiled on, with the scorching, blazing sun above them, and the burning sands of the desert beneath their feet. No sound of streams gladdened their ears, no green tree or grass delighted their eyes.

On, this vast multitude moves in silence, when at last they see green trees and bushes. Now they know that water is near. How they rush on to the streams, which are life to them, and the whole multitude stoops to drink. But, hark! what is the meaning of that loud, wild cry of pain and disappointment?

Brave men groan aloud; the mothers weep for their children, whose sufferings are worse to them than their own; the little ones dash down the water with a moaning cry. But why? The water is so salt and bitter that they cannot drink it. The streams only mock the agony of their thirst, for they see water, but they loathe to taste it. They had been used to the sweet water of the Nile, which is some of the finest in the world.

No wonder they were disappointed. But they murmured, instead of praying to God. He had helped them through worse troubles than this, and they should have trusted in him now. They grumbled to Moses, and said, What shall we drink?

The Water Made Sweet.

The Lord had pity on their suffering, and showed Moses a tree which he told him to throw into the waters, and then the bitter taste would be taken away, and they would be fit to drink. The name of the place where these bitter waters were was called Marah, for Marah means "bitter."

The next day the Israelites moved on to

Elim, and there they rested under the shade of beautiful palm-trees, and there they found an abundance of sweet water.

When the Israelites had been out of the land of Egypt for about a month, they found that they had eaten up nearly all the corn and other food that they had brought with them. They were now in the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Sinai. They could buy no food in the desert, nor did any corn grow there. As they had before suffered thirst, so now they began to feel the pain of hunger. So they grumbled again.

They said, It would have been better for us to have died in Egypt, than to come to this desert to die of hunger. Our first-born had better have been slain with those of the Egyptians, we had better have been drowned with our enemies in the Red Sea, than have come to this trouble.

Then they began to think of the bread and meat they had eaten in Egypt, but they forgot how hard was their slavery there. Now they were free men, on their way to the land promised to their fathers. It was not brave of them to think so much of the difficulties by the way, and it was very faithless and foolish of them not to trust God, when he had helped them so often.

A Large Flock of Quails.

God was grieved that they should murmur, yet he had pity on their wants. He sent them both meat and bread. That very evening a vast flock of quails came up and covered the camp and the Israelites were able to catch them in great numbers. They were most likely going to Egypt to feast in the cornfields, for this was about the season when corn was ripe.

Now the Israelites had plenty of meat, and they could also dry the flesh of the birds that they did not want for present use, ready for a future day. This was done by stripping off the skin with the feathers, and putting the body of the bird into the hot sand for a little while, when it would be dry and keep good some time.

This is the promise the Lord made, and we are also told how he kept his word. The Lord said unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather some every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in: and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?

The Ground Covered with Bread.

And Moses said, The Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we. Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.

And Moses told Aaron to say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord: for he hath heard your murmurings. As Aaron spoke unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, they looked towards the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

And the Lord said unto Moses, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall

be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. In the evening the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew was dried up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna; for they knew not what it was.

And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer (about five pints) for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents.

And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they measured it, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

The Manna Lasts Two Days.

On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

Some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

The Israelites called the name of this bread "Manna," because they did not know what it was. The word manna comes from "man hu," the Hebrew of "what is this?" The manna was very nice; it was like meal and honey when eaten raw, but when cooked it had a taste of fresh oil, a flavor much liked by the Israelites.

God did not wish the Israelites to forget how he had fed them in the wilderness, when they reached Canaan. He said, Save a measure full of manna, that it may be kept for future generations, to see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. The supply of manna never failed until they reached the land of Canaan. God gave them day by day their daily bread.

A Fountain in a Rock.

At last the Israelites left the wilderness of Sin, and came to a place called Rephidim. Here again they wanted water, and instead of being patient, and waiting for God's help, they began to blame Moses. They said,

Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to kill us, and our children, and our cattle with thirst?

Then Moses cried to God, and said, What shall I do? the people are almost ready to stone me to death. God said, Go in before the people, and take with you the elders of Israel; and take the rod with which you divided the Red Sea. I will go before you, and show you a rock in Horeb which you shall smite with your rod, and out of it shall come water, so that the people may drink. Then Moses went with the elders of Israel to the rock in Hereb, and smote it, and waters flowed from it in refreshing streams down to the place where the Israelites had set up their tents. This water lasted them for the whole time that they remained in that neighborhood, which was more than a year. The rock which it was thought was struck by Moses, is to be seen by travelers at the present day.

MOSES BRINGING WATER FROM THE ROCK.

THE ISRAELITES AT MOUNT SINAI

Then came a people called the Amalekites, and fought against the children of Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to a brave man whose name was Joshua, Choose men, and go out and fight with Amalek; to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. Joshua did as Moses had said. He chose some brave men and went to fight Amalek; and Moses, Aaron and Hur, Miriam's husband, went to the top of the hill where they could see the battle in the valley below.

AARON AND HUR HOLDING UP THE HANDS OF MOSES.

When Moses held up his hand the children of Israel were successful and the battle was in their favor, but when Moses let down his hand Amalek prevailed. Moses was tired, and they brought a stone for him to sit on; his hands were heavy, and so Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on one side of him and the other on the other side. This they did until the sun went down. And Joshua and his men overcame Amalek.

God was displeased with Amalek for making war against the children of Israel, and he said the time would come when the Amalekites would be destroyed and no one would remember them. Then Moses built an altar to remind the people that God had said he would punish the Amalekites for their wickedness.

Now when Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God

had done for the children of Israel, he took Zipporah, Moses' wife, and his two sons Gershom and Eliezer and brought them to Moses. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and kissed him, and hearkened to his voice, and did all he said.

And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

At the Foot of Mount Sinai.

And Moses by Jethro's advice chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard cases they brought unto Moses but every small matter they judged themselves. And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

The Israelites next came to the desert of Sinai or Horeb, and there they encamped before the mountain. This mountain is about three miles in length, and it has two summits or peaks; one is called Mount Horeb, the other Mount Sinai; but Mount Sinai is by far the highest of all the mountains in the whole of that district.

This was the place where Moses saw the burning bush, and here they were to wait, while God made known to them his will, and gave to them their laws as a nation. Here, too, it was that God gave the laws which we call "The Ten Commandments."

Most likely the Israelites pitched their tents in a large plain on the south of Mount Sinai; from this place all the vast host of Israel would have a good view of this grand "Mount of God." The ground here, opposite the mountain, rises, and they could pitch their tents, row above row, while Sinai would seem like a lofty pulpit from which God's words would be uttered in the hearing of every ear.

God told Moses now to tell the people that if they would but obey his voice, then he would make them his special care, above all people. Moses told the people these words of the Lord, and they sent for answer, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.

Now they had agreed to do as God bid them, and God had agreed to take particular care of them, and to make them his own people. This was an agreement or covenant, in which God said that he would do certain things if they would do certain things. We are quite sure that the Lord would always keep his covenant, but we shall soon see how easily the Israelites broke theirs.

Thunders and Lightnings.

God now said, In three days I will come down in sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai, so tell the people to get ready for that day. They must bathe their persons, they must wash their clothes, for I am holy, and they must put away all uncleanness. They must set bounds all round the Mount, so that no man nor beast may be able to go up

the mountain, for it is to be kept sacred while I appear there.

Then the people did as the Lord directed; and on the morning of the third day, there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount. Now they heard the sound of a trumpet both loud and long, came down from heaven upon it in the fire; and the smoke was like that of a furnace, and the whole of this huge granite mountain shook. Again the trumpet sounded long, and the sound grew louder and louder.

Then the voice of God said to Moses, Tell the people to beware how they come too

MOSES RECEIVING THE TABLES OF THE LAW.

and all the people trembled in their tents. They felt that God was there.

Moses said to the people, Come from the camp to the bottom of the mountain, to meet with God. They came and stood there before the Lord. Now the whole mountain seemed altogether to smoke, for the Lord near; for if they only touch the mountain, they must instantly die for their rashness, they must be stoned or thrust through with a dart. So Moses went to the people, and told them all these words.

Then God spoke to the people, saying, I am Jehovah, who brought you out of the

land of Egypt; you shall have no other gods but me.

Some nations have many gods that they worship, but we know that they are not true gods; for there is but one God who made all things in heaven and in earth, and his name is Jehovah.

Must Not Worship Idols.

God also said that no one was to make any image, or the likeness of anything, to bow down to it and worship it. First of all people made idols; not that they thought the idols were God, but they thought that God would be worshipped through the idol; and at last they forgot about God, and worshipped only the idol. People like to worship what they can see; so the Persians, for instance, thought, God is great and glorious, and bright and pure, what is most like him? They thought fire was, which gives light and heat, so they worshipped God through the fire, but before long they forgot God and worshipped the fire, and the sun, and other things beside.

God then told the people, that they must not take his name in vain, for he would hold the man guilty who did so.

Again, God said, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you may work, but the seventh day is the Lord's day, in it you shall rest. You may do no work on that day; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servants, nor your cattle. The Sabbath is like a sacred holiday, a rest-time given to all men by God himself.

The next commandment that God gave was, Honor your father and your mother, that you may live long in the land which the Lord your God will give you. The Bible says a great deal about obedience to parents, and respectful behavior to them. God here gives a promise to those who obey this command. It shows how much he thinks of right conduct to parents. It will go well with the obedient child, but it will go ill with the child who dishonors his parents.

Thou Shalt not Kill.

Thou shalt not kill, was the sixth commandment that God gave. We must not give way to anger, for is not that one of the first feelings that lead on to murder? It is a very shocking thing to kill a man, but it is also a shocking thing to have angry, quarrelsome, unloving feelings in the heart.

The seventh commandment teaches us to be modest and pure in our thoughts and feelings. How sad it is to hear loud rough tones, or to see bold rude looks. Do you not love the drooping snowdrop, which has no stain upon its pure white flower? We should try to be like that in its modesty, sweetness, and purity. We may often learn lessons from the beautiful flowers.

In the eighth commandment God said, Thou shalt not steal. He who takes the very least thing belonging to another, without his knowing it, is a thief. Perhaps what you take may never be missed by men; but it is none the less stealing. It is far better to suffer by going without, than to have everything you want, if you get it dishonestly. A mother who had a large garden full of fruit and flowers, always felt quite happy to let her children play in it anywhere. She said, "My children will never pluck the flowers, nor eat the fruit without leave, for if they find any fruit dropped from the trees they always bring it to me to ask if they may have it."

Again, God said, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. That means, that we are not to say unkind things of others. We must not tell tales of our companions; we may say all the good we

THE SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS. 109

know of people, but we must not talk of their faults so as to injure them.

We Must not Covet.

Again, God spoke; he said, You must not covet anything belonging to your neighbor. That is, you must not long to have your neighbor's goods. Before, God had said, You must not steal, now he says, You must not even wish to get away your neighbor's things from him.

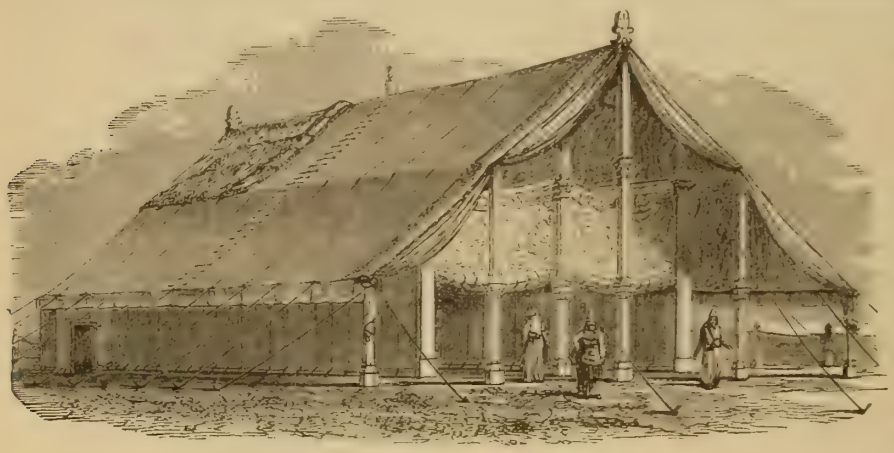
When God had spoken these ten commandments, the Israelites felt that they could bear the awful scene no longer. Perhaps at the end of each command, the thunder pealed anew, and the trumpet sounded again, and the mountain smoked afresh. So terrible was the sight that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and tremble. The people moved farther away from the mountain and stood afar off.

They said to Moses, Do you speak to us, and we will listen, but let not God speak to us, lest we die. So the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was, to hear what other laws God had to give to the people.

For rather more than eleven months the hosts of Israel were encamped in the plains of Horeb. During this time laws were given them, which separated them from all other nations. God was their chosen King. Now they were under his law, for they had said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.

They were told in what order they were to march when they journeyed, and also when the different tribes were to encamp. The kind of animals that they might eat was also shown them; these were called clean animals, and those that they were not allowed to eat were called unclean.

At this time a regular service for the worship of God was established, and the tribe of Levi was set apart to be the priests or ministers of religion. The tabernacle, too, was set up. This was a kind of palace-tent for their King Jehovah, who by his covenant with them said that he would dwell among them, and a bright cloud was always to be seen resting over the ark in the holy of holies in token of his presence.



OUTSIDE VIEW OF THE TABERNACLE.

God told Moses how this tabernacle was to be made. It was to be made so that it could be easily taken down and put up again like a tent, for this was necessary, as the Israelites had to carry it about with them through all their desert wanderings.

This tabernacle was divided into two parts by a veil or curtain of costly make. The innermost part was called the holy of holies; nothing was kept there but the ark of the covenant. This ark, or chest, or box, was made of hard wood, which was covered all

over with pure gold. The top of it was called the mercy-seat; two angels made of pure gold overshadowed it with their wings.

This ark was chiefly made to hold the two tables of stone, upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments. Other precious things were put there, such as a golden pot full of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded.

No one ever went into this holiest place where the ark was but the high priest, and he only went once every year. This was on the great day of atonement, when he went to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the Lord, thus to make an antonement for his own sins, and the sins of the people.

The other part of the tabernacle outside this curtain, was called the holy place; there the priests daily ministered. In this there was a golden candlestick, or rather lamp-stand, on which were placed seven lamps, the lights of which were kept burning with purest oil.

There, also, was a table covered over with gold, upon which were kept loaves of bread, one for each tribe of Israel. This bread was called shew-bread, it was changed every week, and the stale loaves, or biscuits, were eaten only by the priests.

Here, too, just in front of the curtain which hid the holy of holies, was the golden altar of incense. On this was burnt sweet smelling woods and gums, so that a sweet odor was always going up towards God. The prayers of good people are like sweet incense, as they go up from earth to the throne of God in heaven.

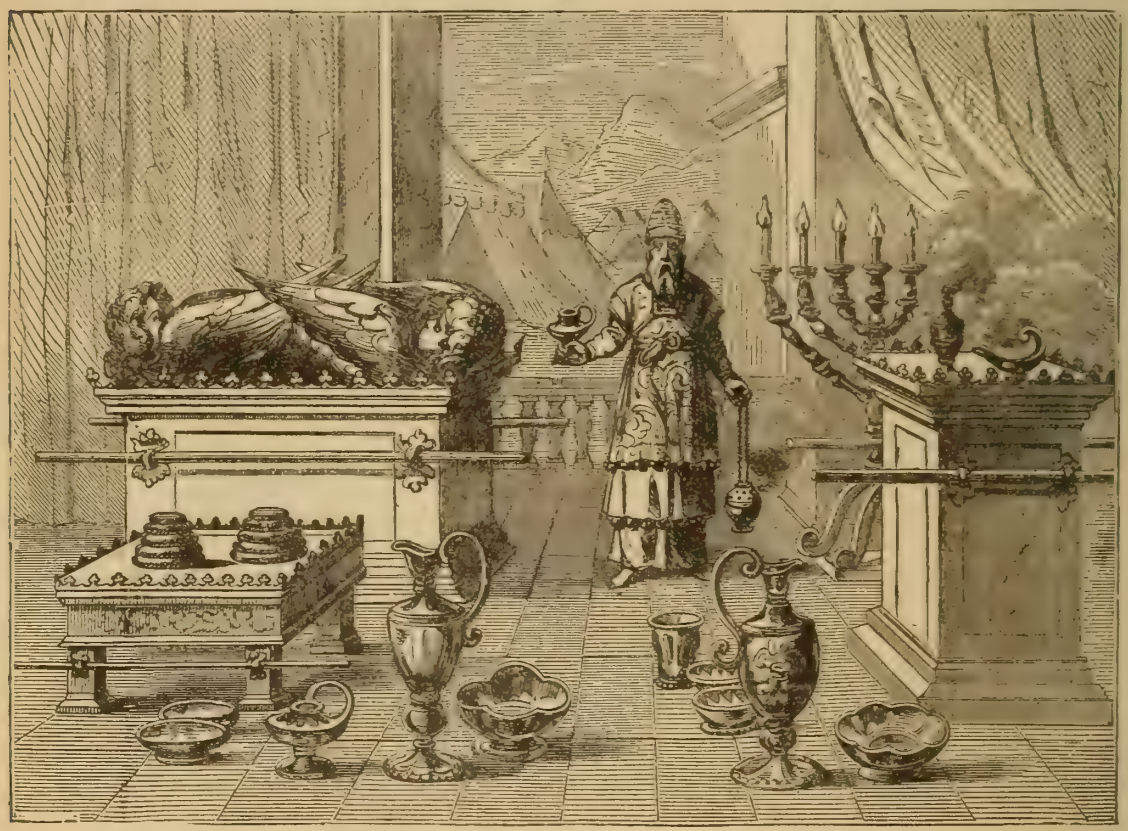
This tabernacle was furnished with spoons, basins, dishes, covers, and many other things all made of pure gold. It was like a dwelling-house with its furniture, and not merely a place of worship. It was built to show that the Lord God would dwell among them as their King. Bread and meat and wine were offered there, part of which was burnt or poured in sacrifice as God's portion, and part went for the use of the priests, who were the servants of God's household.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

The tabernacle stood in a large court, which was enclosed by poles and curtains, like a wall all round, but was open at the top to the sky. Just at the entrance of this court was the large altar of burnt-offering, where the animals killed for sacrifice were

burnt, and between this altar and the entrance to the tabernacle was the laver or fountain made of brass where the priests washed their hands and feet, while they were about the service of God.

The whole of the tabernacle, with its ceremonies and sacrifices, pointed to good things to come, when all these would be done away with. Many of the sacrifices were to teach them to look forward to the time when Christ would come, and offer up his life for man's sin.



FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE.

I cannot tell you now of all the many sacrifices that God appointed. I have told you of the passover lamb, now I will tell you about the sin-offering, on the great day of atonement.

On this solemn day the people did no work, and the high priest put off his splendid robes, and only appeared in his plainest dress, for it was a day of humbling before God, on account of sin. First of all, as Aaron and the priests were sinful men as well as the people, they had to offer a sin-offering to God for their own sins, before they could offer one for the sins of the people.

This done, Aaron took two young goats, and brought them before the altar. These were for the sin-offering of the people. One goat he killed, and took its blood into the holy of holies, and sprinkled it on the mercy-seat before God. Then Aaron laid his hands upon the head of the live goat, and said over all the sins of the people, and, as it were, put them upon the head of this goat. Then he sent the goat away into the wilderness, bear-

ing with it all the sins of the people. This was to teach the people that God having pardoned their sins, would remember them against them no more. This points to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

Besides the sacrifices and offerings at special times, there was a lamb offered every morning and evening for their daily sins; so when they saw the smoke of the sacrifice ascending they must have felt how constantly they needed to be forgiven. All the animals that were offered were to be quite free from any blemish, or spot.

And the Lord said to Moses, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

The Cloud over the Mercy-seat.

After the tabernacle was finished, God did not call Moses on Mount Sinai again, to speak with him, but he called him into the tabernacle. For God came into the tabernacle in a cloud over the mercy-seat and spoke with Moses there. And God told Moses to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle to consecrate them, that is, make them priests.

Then Moses brought them and he called all the people, that they might come and see what the Lord commanded him to do. And while they stood around the door of the tabernacle he took Aaron and his sons and washed them with water; and he put on Aaron the beautiful garments that had been made for him. Afterwards he poured oil upon his head and anointed him. He took Aaron's sons also, and put their garments upon them and offered up sacrifices to God. So Aaron and his sons were made priests, to

THE LAVER.

stay at the tabernacle and burn incense and offer up sacrifices for the children of Israel. Before this time other men might offer up their own sacrifices, as Abel, Noah and the Patriarchs had done. But now that God had chosen Aaron and his sons to be priests, no one else might offer up a sacrifice; every man must bring his offering to the tabernacle, and let the priests burn it for him upon the altar there.

The priests were commanded to offer up two lambs every day, one in the morning and the other in evening, for the sins of all the people of Israel. But God told Moses that, if any

man wanted to bring an offering for his own sins, alone, he might bring an ox, or a sheep

SENDING THE SCAPEGOAT INTO THE WILDERNESS.

or a goat to the door of the tabernacle and lay his hand upon it and kill it, and God would be pleased with it, for an offering, not because the blood of animals could take away sins, but it served as a shadow and type of the sacrifice of Christ, who poured out his

THE HIGH PRIEST OFFERING INCENSE ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR.

blood unto death, in order to take away the sins of the world.

The priests were to dismiss the people with a blessing saying to them: The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Among the sacred seasons of the Israelites the most prominent were: the Sabbath day, the Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks and of the First Fruits; the Feast of Tabernacles, the great day of Atonement, the Sabbath year, and the Year of Jubilee.

Beautiful Garments.

The garments of the priests, which designated their office, were not worn by the Levites. The priestly garments were very simple; the chief article was a tunic, made with sleeves, held together by a linen girdle, and extending from the neck to the ankles; the material and the color, white linen, were symbols of purity and holiness. In addition to this official garment, the high priest wore a blue robe or coat, adorned on the hem with pomegranates and bells of gold; the former were symbols of the Word, and the bell was a symbol of proclamation.

He also wore an ephod attached to the shoulders, made of costly materials of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet; the breast-plate was attached to it in front, by means of rings and chains, made of gold. This breast-plate was adorned with twelve precious stones, on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved; it was a memorial implying that the high priest, as the highest mediator of the old covenant, should always bear the people upon his heart. A small plate of gold was, besides, attached to the priestly mitre bearing the inscription: Holiness to the Lord.

The people had now remained an entire year in their tents, the law was given, the tabernacle was erected, the priests were already occupied with their official duties, and the period of departure was near at hand. After the number of men who were able to bear arms had again been taken, and the second passover had been celebrated, the Lord gave the appointed signal: the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle and guided the people in their journeying.

The tabernacle was then taken down by the Levites, and set up again after a three days' journey in the wilderness of Paran, where the children of Israel encamped. And, whenever the ark was lifted up, Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.

The tabernacle stood always in the middle of the camp, the tents of the Levites were next, and the tents of the other tribes were farther off, but on every side of the tabernacle. And they kept their tents in the same place until they took them down to go on their journey again.

THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND

THE FOUNTAIN IN THE WILDERNESS.

CHAPTER IX.

B. C. 1490.

THE GOLDEN CALF—MOSES ANGRY AND BREAKS THE TABLES OF THE LAW—THE GLORY OF MOUNT SINAI—NUMBERING THE PEOPLE—THE PILLAR OF FIRE—THE ISRAELITES MURMUR—PUNISHMENT BY FIRE—A STRONG WIND BRINGS QUAILS FOR FOOD—SPIES SENT TO THE PROMISED LAND—THE BRAZEN SERPENT—STORY OF BALAAM AND BALAK—DEATH OF MOSES—THE PEOPLE MOURN THIRTY DAYS.

DURING the time Moses was up on Mount Sinai, speaking with God about all those things told in the last story, the Israelites were very uneasy because he did not come back. He had been gone for forty days, when the people came to Aaron, and said, Where is Moses? We cannot tell what has become of him: we are afraid he is dead. Make us, therefore, an image in the likeness of God, that we may worship before it.

Aaron was afraid to tell the people how wicked this was, and he said, Bring me your golden ornaments. Probably he hoped the people would not be willing to part with what they liked so much, and then he would not be obliged to make them an image. But the people were determined to have a likeness of a god, so they took off their ornaments, and brought them to Aaron.

Then Aaron made of them the likeness of a calf or bull in gold. The most famous of the gods of Egypt was worshipped under the form of a bull, so Aaron thought it would please these people if he made for them a likeness of their own great God in the same form.

Thus they broke the second commandment, where God says, that they were not to make the likeness of anything, to bow down and worship it. Is it not wonderful that they forgot it so soon? One would have thought that they could never have looked up to the great mountain before them, without thinking of the solemn words that God had so lately uttered from its heights, amidst thunder, and lightning, and earthquake, and the loud trumpet, whose voice awoke the echo of the mountains round.

They Worship an Image.

When the image was set up, then all the people came before it, and offered sacrifices and feasted. While they were doing this, God said to Moses, Make haste and go down to the people, for they are sinning. Then Moses went, and he took in his hand the tablets of stone, which were the work of God, and the writing on them was the writing of God, engraven on the tablets. As he came near to the camp, he saw the people dancing

round the calf; then he felt very grieved and very angry, and he threw down the tablets, on which God had written his laws and his covenant, and broke them at the bottom of the mount.

The breaking of these tablets showed how the people had broken God's laws and the

THE ISRAELITES WORSHIPPING THE GOLDEN CALF.

covenant that they had so lately made with him, when they said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. Before this time, when they had done wrong, God had not punished them; but now they had agreed to be under his laws, and because they had broken them they must suffer the consequences.

First of all, Moses took the calf, burnt it in the fire, ground the ashes to powder, and then threw the dust into the water that the people drank. They must have thought what a poor god it was, if it could be served so. Then Moses said, Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come to me. So all the Levites came to him. Now Moses said, Take your swords and kill those who have been chief in this sin. And the Levites killed three thousand men. Then Moses went back to the mountain, and prayed to God to forgive the people their sin.

Afterwards God told Moses to get two more tablets of stone, like those which he had broken. On these God wrote the same

laws that he had written on the first tablets. Moses was away in the mountain with God just as long the second time as he was the first. During those forty days he did neither eat bread nor drink water, for God kept him alive without the need of food.

When he came down to the people, they looked at his face, and the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses put a veil over his face to hide its brightness, while he talked to the people of all the things that God had shown him, when he was up in Mount Sinai. What was it that made Moses' face shine so brightly? You know that he had been with God in the Mount, and it must have been the reflection of God's glory upon his face. We grow like to those with whom we live, in thought and feeling; if we keep good company we shall be like our companions. Moses had been in glorious company, and some of that glory was shared by him.

After this God commanded Moses to number the people. He was told to find out how many there were from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel. The families were numbered according to their heads. All those that were numbered by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war were six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty.

MOSES DESTROYING THE TABLES OF THE LAW.

MOSES BRINGING THE NEW TABLES OF THE LAW.

At length the pillar of fire began to move, which was an order from God for the Israelites to leave the desert of Sinai, and march onwards towards Canaan. They always knew when God wished them to move forward, and when it was his will that they should stay at any place, by the moving or resting of this wonderful pillar.

It was a good thing that God chose when they should go or stay, for if Moses had done so, they would have been sure to have grumbled. The old people would have wanted to stay still in one spot, the young ones would have wanted to move on too fast; some would have liked one place, and some another; but all would have been discontented. Now God, through this fiery pillar, fixed all their movements, and the people knew that it was their guide.

For three days they journeyed till they came to the wilderness of Paran, and then the pillar rested; so they set up their tents. At this place they began to complain. This grumbling, unthankful spirit displeased God, after all he had done for them. They did not like the hardship and weariness of a desert life, and said, How hot the sun is here, and how the sand scorches our feet! How dull it is in this still desert, and how uncomfortable to be always moving about from place to place! They had many hardships, certainly; but they were now on their way to the Promised Land, where they would have a beautiful and settled home.

What Became of the Grumblers.

God heard their murmurings; and he did not pass them over now, for they were under his laws, and he punished them for their sin. He sent a fire, which burnt many of those who had grumbled most. Perhaps this fire was lightning, which struck them dead in a moment; perhaps it was the hot desert wind, called the simoon, which breathed its scorching breath upon them, and they died. The Israelites called this place Taberah, or "the burning," because of the sad end of some of their number.

When the Israelites left Egypt, a great many of the lowest of the people went with them. They are called the "mixed multitude," and they were mostly the very lowest of the low. They were very often the first to begin to grumble, and to leave the worship of God, and were a constant trouble to the Israelites. At the very next place of encampment when they left Taberah, these people again began to murmur. What is the matter now? They do not want for water, for the streams from the smitten rock still follow them. They do not want for bread, for God has never once forgotten to rain down the manna from heaven.

They Cry for Meat.

They cry, We want meat. We remember the fish that we did eat in Egypt freely; the refreshing cucumbers, the cooling melons, the pleasant onions! We have nothing but dry food here; we are tired of having only this manna. It was not only the mixed multitude who grumbled. They began, and the sin spread like a disease, as all sin is, through the camp. Soon Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent; and the Lord heard, too. God told Moses to say to the people, You ask, Who shall give you flesh to eat? I will. You shall eat flesh; not for one day only, nor for two days, nor for five days, neither for ten days, nor for twenty days, but for a whole month, until you hate the sight of it.

Then God sent a strong wind, which brought them quails. These birds came in very, very large numbers, and they flew so

low that the people caught them easily. Now they had flesh in abundance; but God had not given it them in love, but in punishment. It was a year since they had eaten meat, and now they ate so much that it made them ill—so ill that a very great many people died. God knew what was the best food for them to eat in the desert, and they would be quite sure that he would supply all their real wants. Whenever they tried to have their own way, they always got into trouble; but they were slow to learn that God's ways are best.

THE SPIES RETURNING FROM CANAAN.

After this they went on marching and resting, until at last they came to the southern border of the land of Canaan. Now, Moses said, you are in sight of the land which God promised to your fathers: go up and take it; do not be afraid of the people who live in it. But, the people said, We had better send twelve men before us—one man out of each tribe—to search the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come.

So twelve men were chosen to spy out the land. They left the camp early in September, and came back about the middle of October. They were gone forty days, and they brought back with them some of the fruits which grew in the country to show their countrymen. How delighted they must have been to see the figs, and the grapes, and the pomegranates, which they were told

grew in rich abundance in this land which was to be their own! There was one large cluster of grapes, cut from the valley of Eschol, which they looked at with great surprise. It was carried by two men on a pole, partly because of its great size, and partly to keep it from being bruised.

The twelve men said, We came unto the land where you sent us, and indeed it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. They meant to say, it is a land where there is plenty of food and grass for our cattle, so we shall have plenty of milk; and there are a great many wild bees which store large quantities of honey from the flowers.

The Giants of Canaan.

When the people heard this good account of the land, they longed to go and take it: then the spies said, Though it is a fruitful land, yet the people who live in it are like giants, and they have strong cities with walls all round them. This frightened the people, but Caleb, who was one of the twelve spies, said, Do not be afraid: we are well able to overcome the land; let us go up at once to take it. And Joshua said the same. Then the other spies said, We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are. The people, when they heard these words, actually wept from disappointment and fear. They began to murmur against Moses and Aaron, and said, Oh that we had died in Egypt! oh that we had died in the wilderness! We had better return to Egypt: let us appoint a captain to take us back again. Then Joshua and Caleb said, Do not act so foolishly and wickedly: the land which we passed through to search is an exceedingly fruitful one. Do not be afraid of the people who live there, for the Lord is with us to keep us from harm, but he is not with them: you need not fear them.

The mean-spirited people would not listen to these two brave men, but took up stones to stone them to death. All at once the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle, in sight of all the people, so they knew that God was going to speak to them by Moses.

This was what God said to these faithless, cowardly people, Because you have forgotten how I delivered you from your enemies in Egypt, and have helped you through all difficulties by the way; because you have not believed that I would still help you, to conquer all your other enemies, and give you the land that I promised you, none of you that are grown up men and women shall ever see this good land You shall wander for forty years in the wilderness, as the men were forty days in searching the land; a year for each day shall you wander about in the wilderness, until all that are twenty years old and more shall be dead. Joshua and Caleb, who spoke the truth, shall go in, and so shall your little ones, who you said would be sure to be killed by the inhabitants. After forty years I will give the land to them, but not to you; you are not worthy of it.

The ten men who spoke evil of the land, and who discouraged the people, were struck dead by God's displeasure on the spot, but Joshua and Caleb lived on.

In Great Trouble.

And now the people mourned greatly. They had something to grieve over now, and they found, by their doom to wander forty years in the desert, with no hope of seeing the good land, what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God.

Thirty-eight years after God had sentenced the Israelites to wander for forty years in the wilderness, they came to Kadesh, where Miriam died and was buried. Here they suffered greatly for want of water. With

THE HIGH PRIEST IN FULL DRESS.

great impatience and folly they wished themselves dead, and acted just as their fathers had done at Rephidim. They scolded Moses and Aaron for bringing them out of Egypt, and behaved very badly.

Then God said to Moses, Take the rod, make all the people come together; then do you speak to the rock which is before your eyes, and water shall come out of it for the people to drink. So Moses and Aaron gathered the people together before the rock, and Moses said, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

Then Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly. Then God said to Moses and Aaron, You have not honored me before the people, so you shall not lead them into the good land which I have given them. Moses lost his temper, and spoke angrily to the people. God told him to speak to the rock, but he hit it twice. He said, Must we fetch you water? when it was only God's power that could bring water out of the rock. So, for his impatience and unbelief in God, in which Aaron joined, these two great men were not allowed to lead the Israelites into Canaan.

Death of Aaron.

Very soon after this the Israelites came to Mount Hor. Here, God told Aaron, was the place where he would die. Moses and Aaron, and Eleazer, the son of Aaron, went at God's command to the top of this bare and rugged mountain. All the people stood below, and watched these three as they walked up this dreary height—they knew that only two out of the three would ever come down again, that their high priest was gone up to die. When they reached the top, Moses took off the priestly robes from Aaron and put them upon his son Eleazer; then Aaron gave one look at the tents of Israel in the plains below, one long look towards the Promised Land, whose distant hills he could just see, and then Moses and Eleazer heard his last words, and Aaron died. For thirty days the whole congregation mourned for their lost high priest.

At last the fiery pillar moved again, and they journeyed round the coasts of Edom. Here they were much cast down because of the troubles of the way. They had not yet learned the lesson of patient trust, and again they grumbled. They longed for other bread than manna, and spoke against God and against Moses.

A Plague in the Tents.

So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people so that a great many died. There were a great many poisonous creatures in the desert; but we never hear of their being bitten until now. God had always taken care of them, and kept them from this as well as other dangers; but now, for their sin, he let the serpents follow their nature and bite the people.

Perhaps the serpents were called "fiery" because their color was yellowish or bright. Perhaps it was because of the burning pain which followed their bite, or the raging thirst which people felt from the effect of poison in their blood. The people very soon confessed their sin, and begged Moses to pray to God to take away the serpents from them. And Moses prayed for the people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Make a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten shall feel well again, when he looks at it. Moses did so; and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

And the children of Israel set forward and

pitched in the plains of Moab, near the river Jordan by Jericho.

And when Balak, king of Moab, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, he was sore afraid of the people, and sent messengers unto a prophet named Balaam in Mesopotamia, to call him saying: Behold there is a people come out from Egypt, behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me; peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And they departed and came to Balaam with rewards.

And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed. Therefore Balaam said unto the princes of Balak: Get you into your land, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. But Balak sent again princes, more honorable and with richer gifts; and God said to Balaam: Go with them; yet the word which I shall say to thee, that shalt thou do.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled

because Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness, and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. And the ass saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way.

But the Angel of the Lord stood in a path, and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam: What have I done unto thee, that thou has smitten me these three times? And Balaam said to the ass, because thou has mocked me; I wish there were a sword in my hand, for then I would kill thee. Then the Lord opened the

BALAAM MET BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.

shut in by vineyard walls on each side. And when the ass saw the Angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again. And the Angel of the Lord went further and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the Angel, she fell down under Balaam; eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and Balaam bowed himself and fell flat to the ground, and said to the Angel of the Lord, I have sinned; now therefore, if it displease thee, I will return. And the Angel of the Lord said to Balaam, Go with the men, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, shalt thou speak.

BALAAM'S SACRIFICE ON SEVEN ALTARS.

So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. And on the morrow Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into a high place that thence he might see the utmost part of the people. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams. And Balaam did as Balak had spoken; and they offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth and he said, From Aram hath Balak brought me, the king of Moab, from the mountains of the earth, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed, or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?

The Anger of Balak.

And Balaam seeing the vision of the Almighty and falling into a trance, said again, I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the princes of Moab and overthrow all the sons of tumult. Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.

And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together, and said to Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times; therefore now flee thou to thy place. And he sent him away without any of the silver and gold which Balaam wanted so much. Notwithstanding, Balaam afterwards craftly advised the Moabites and Midianites to entice Israel to practice idolatrous rites; this plan was so successful, that a plague, which the Lord sent, destroyed 24,000 of the people. Hence the Lord commanded Moses to make war against the Moabites and Midianites and they slew their kings and people; and Balaam also they slew with the edge of the sword.

The Last Days of Moses.

Moses knew that he could not lead the people into the land of Canaan. He must die as the Lord had said, for he had sinned at the rock. He feared the Israelites would not think how they had been led through the desert. He talked to them for the last time and brought back to their minds all the things God had done for them.

He asked the Lord to choose a man to take his place, lest if they had no guide to lead them they might be lost as sheep with no shepherd. The Lord said Joshua should lead them. Moses told the people they must keep the laws of God and teach their children to do so at all times; and they must talk to them of God, so that they would learn to love him.

And when the Lord led them into Canaan and gave them all the great cities that they had not built, and wells that they had not digged, and vineyards and olive trees which they had not planted, they must think of the Lord and how much he had done for them. He had led them for long years and fed them, and their clothes had not grown old and their feet had not been sore by the way. He had brought them out of that place to this good land full of streams, where the wheat grew and grapes and all sorts of fruit. They should not want. They would find brass and iron if they dug in the ground and could make tools and all sorts of things for their use.

Their flocks and herds would do well in that land, and they would grow rich, but they must not think they had gained all these things by their own might. They must keep in mind that the Lord their God had given them all. If they did not serve him, but

132 MOSES REHEARSING THE COMMANDMENTS TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

took other gods, they would be served in the same way as he meant to serve the nations that lived in sin. Moses told them they must soon cross the Jordan and the Lord would lead them. The people of the land might try to keep them out but he would make them win. Though they had sinned in the desert, he was still their God.

THE LORD APPEARING TO MOSES AND JOSHUA IN THE PILLAR OF A CLOUD.

The land of Canaan was a place of streams. Egypt had one river, the Nile, which flowed over its banks once a year so that the fields near it bore much fruit. But the soil far off was dry, and men had to carry water to it, so that the grass and plants might grow. In Canaan rain fell and grain and grass grew well, and vines and all sorts of fruit were found there. The people of Canaan had set up their false gods on hills and under trees in all parts of their land. They had built altars and burnt up their own children on them. Moses told the children of Israel that they must pull down all these places and break the false gods. And if one of the men of the land should try to make them kneel down to these false gods, he must be stoned to death.

If there was a poor man among them, they must lend him what he needed and the Lord would bless them. They must keep some cities where one who had killed a man by chance might hide. If he had meant to kill the man for hate, then he must be put to

death. But if the thing was done by chance, and the friends of the dead man chased him to kill him, he might fly to one of these cities. When he reached the gate, he must tell the guard what he had done. Then they would give him a place to stay. If the friends of the man whom he had killed came to ask for him, they would not give him up, as he had not meant to do wrong. But if a man who meant to kill came there, they were not to let him in, but he must be put to death for his sin.

When they lived in the land each man must take the first of his grain and the first fruit that was ripe and bring them to the Lord's house. The priest would take these gifts and set them down in front of the altar. The man must say, I have brought the first fruits of the land which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And he must pray to the Lord and leave all his gifts there for the use of the priests. The priests were to have no fields to raise grain or fruit of their own, so the first fruits of the land must be brought to them each year.

Stones and Clay.

Moses told them that on the day they should go over Jordan they must raise a great pile of stones, and on these they must smear soft clay, and write all the laws of God on this clay. When it grew hard, all who went by could read the law of God on it.

Moses told them that if they kept the law of God, he would bless them and all that was theirs. Their foes would flee from them. But if they sinned, their fields should not bring forth grain, for locusts should eat it, and their vines would not bring forth grapes. He would send plagues on them and foes who would not spare them but would make them slaves.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

So Moses the servant of the Lord died.

CHAPTER X.

B. C. 1451.

STORY OF JOSHUA—ARRIVAL OF THE ISRAELITES AT JORDAN—CROSSING THE RIVER—RAHAB AND THE SPIES—CAPTURE OF JERICHO—BATTLE AT THE CITY OF AI—ACHAN STONED FOR THEFT—MEN IN OLD CLOTHES—A FURIOUS HAILSTORM—JOSHUA'S GREAT VICTORY—THE PEOPLE CHOOSE WHOM THEY WILL SERVE.

AMONG the children of Israel that came out of Egypt there was a certain Hoshea, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. Moses had seen that he was valiant and skillful, and when the Amalekites came out against Israel at Rephidim, to slay them on their journey to Sinai, Moses appointed him to be captain of the host. So he went and defeated the Amalekites in a great battle; and after that Moses called him by the name of Jehoshua or Joshua, which is, being interpreted, The Lord's Salvation.

And when Moses went up into the mountain of Sinai to receive the law from God, Joshua went with Aaron and the elders so far as it was lawful for them to go; and while he was in the mount Joshua waited for him. From the day when Moses came down from the mount Joshua became his minister, attending on him continually, and dwelling in his tent. Also he was one of the seventy judges whom Moses appointed to do justice among the people.

Very zealous was he for the honor of his chief; for when two of the seventy, Eldad and Medad by name, tarried in the camp, and prophesied there (but the rest prophesied in the tabernacle), he said, My lord Moses, forbid them. But Moses answered, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!

In the second year after the departure of Israel from the land of Egypt, the people approached to the borders of the land which the Lord had promised to their fathers to give them; and they pitched their camp in the wilderness of Paran. Then Moses, as we have seen, chose twelve men, one out of each tribe, that they might go as spies and see the land what it was, and the people that dwelt therein, whether they were strong or weak, few or many, and whether they dwelt in tents or in strongholds. Be of good courage, he said to them, and bring of the fruit of the land.

They Went Through all the Land.

And the time at which the men were sent was the time of the first ripe grapes. Joshua was chosen from the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb from the tribe of Judah. So these twelve men went throughout the land from the wilderness of the south to Mount Lebanon in the north. And when they came to the

brook Eshcol (which is near to Hebron) they cut down one of the clusters of grapes, and carried it upon a staff between two. Also they brought figs and pomegranates from the land. The time which they spent upon their journey was forty days. And when they came back to the place whence they had come, and showed to the people the fruits which they had brought, thus they said to Moses, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. But the people that dwell in the land are strong, great and mighty nations—the Amalekites in the south, and the Amorites in the mountains, and the Canaanites by the sea and by the banks of Jordan, and the children of Anak that are giants. We are but grasshoppers in their sight and in our own. But Caleb said, Let us go up at once and possess the land; for we are well able to overcome the people that inhabit it. Joshua also said, Let us go up. But the people believed the ten spies rather than Caleb and Joshua, and they wept, saying, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt or in the wilderness.

The People Murmur.

And they murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said to one another, Let us make us a captain that he may lead us back into the land of Egypt. But Caleb and Joshua ran among them with their clothes rent, and cried, The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord have a favor for us, He will bring us into it; and as for the people that dwell therein, their strength is gone from them, for the Lord is with us: therefore fear them not. But the people ran upon them, and would have stoned them with stones had they not feared the glory of the Lord, for the glory appeared at that time above the tabernacle. Then the Lord was wroth with the people, and said that all that murmured, from twenty years old and upward, should perish in the wilderness; and the ten spies that gave the evil report died of the plague. Only Caleb and Joshua were left alive.

But when forty years were accomplished from the coming out of Egypt, the children of Israel approached the Promised Land, coming to it from the east. First they subdued the country that is eastward of Jordan, the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. Then came the time when Moses must die, for the Lord had said to him, Thou shalt see the land with thine eyes, but thou shalt not enter it. Thou shalt not go over Jordan.

But before he died he chose Joshua to be the leader of the people after him, for so the Lord commanded him. And he gave him a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage, for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which the Lord sware unto them, and the Lord shall be with thee. Then Moses went up to the top of Pisgah, that he might see the land and die. And Joshua and Phinehas the priest went with him on his way; but they saw him not when he died, nor did they know where he was buried, save that he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor.

Told to go Over the River Jordan.

When Moses was dead, the Lord said to Joshua, Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give them. Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon have I given you, from Lebanon unto the great river, the river Euphrates, and westward to the great sea. Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, for the Lord thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest

Now the people had pitched their camp in the plains of Moab, near to the place where Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. And they looked across the river to the great city of Jericho. Then Joshua commanded the chief men of the tribes that they should bid the people make provision of food, for that within three days they should go over Jordan.

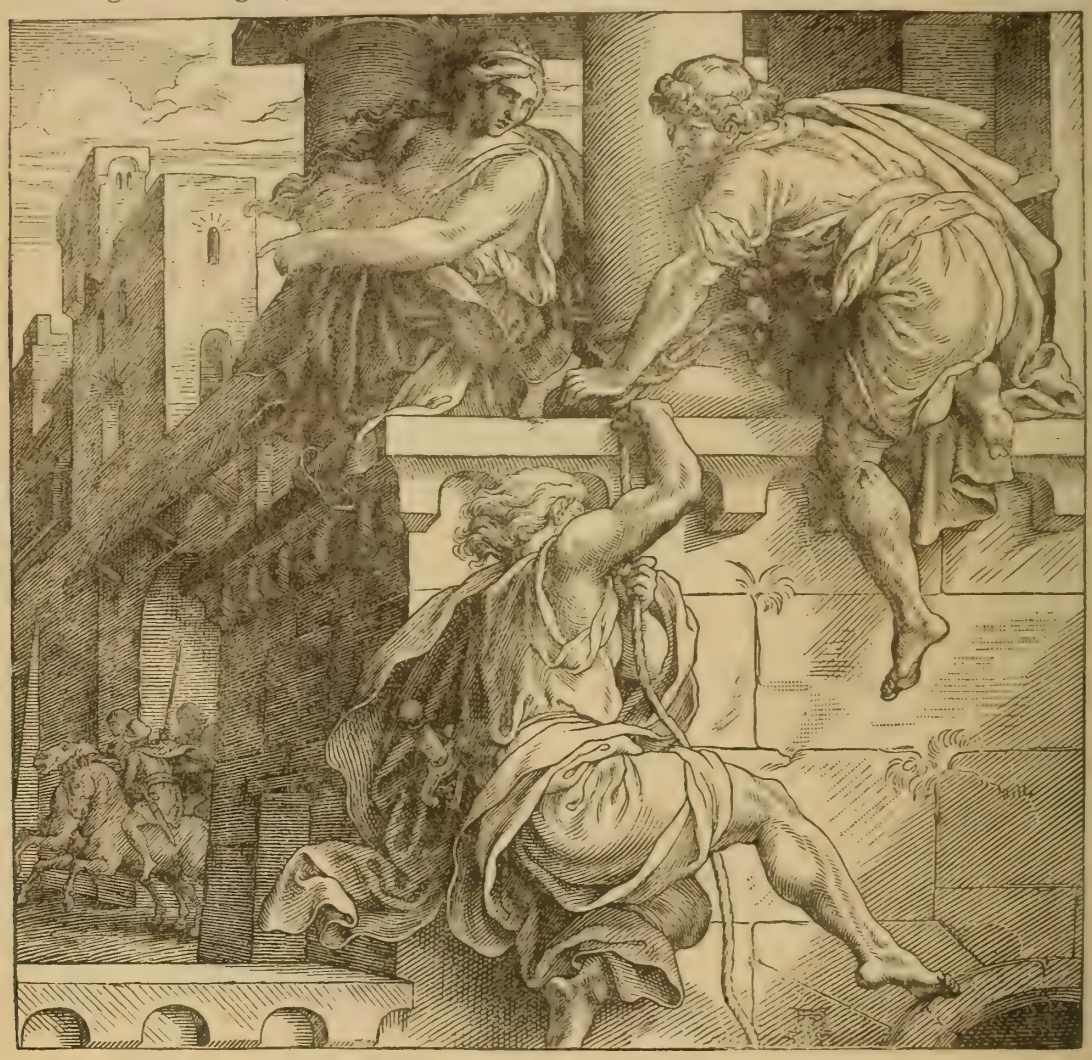
Also, he spoke to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—for these had had their portion given to them on the eastern side of Jordan—and said, Ye shall leave your wives, and your children, and your cattle, on this side of Jordan; but ye yourselves shall go up armed before your brethren, and help them until the Lord shall have given your brethren rest as he hath given it to you. And they said, All that thou commandest us, we will do, and wither-

MOSES GIVING HIS CHARGE TO JOSHUA.

soever thou sendest us, we will go. After this Joshua sent from the camp two men to spy out the city of Jericho. And the men entered into the city, and lodged in the house of a woman that was called Rahab. But they were seen coming in, and it was told the king of Jericho, Behold, there came

in men of the children of Israel to-night to search out the country. And the king sent to Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are lodging in thy house, for they are come to search out all the country. Rahab said to the king's messengers, It is true that there

and hidden them under the stalks of flax, which she had laid there to dry. As for the king's messengers, they pursued after the spies along the road that led to the fords of Jordan; and the gate of the city was shut after them.



RAHAB AND THE SPIES.

came men unto me, but I knew not whence they were. And at the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, they departed; but wither they went, I know not. Pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought the men up to the roof,

But before the spies lay down to sleep Rahab came up to them upon the roof, and said, I know that the Lord hath given you this land, and that all the inhabitants thereof are afraid. We have heard how your God divided the waters of the Red Sea before you,

and how you have utterly destroyed the two kings of the Amorites on the other side of Jordan; and when we heard it our hearts melted, and there remained no courage in any of us. Now, therefore, swear by the Lord that, as I have showed you kindness, so ye will show kindness to me and to my father's house; and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have. And give me a true token that ye will so do.

Then the men answered, We pledge our life for your life, if only ye betray not our business. And when the Lord shall have given us this land, we will deal kindly and truly with you and yours. Then she let them down by the window of her house, for her house was upon the town wall. And she said, Fly to the mountains, lest the pursuers meet you, for they have pursued after you even to the fords of the Jordan. Hide yourselves in the mountains for three days, until the pursuers shall have returned; and then ye can go to your own people.

The men answered her, We will keep the oath which thou hast made us swear to thee.

THE HEBREWS CROSSING THE JORDAN.

And this shall be the token. When we shall have come into the land, bind this scarlet cord in the window from which thou lettest us down. Bring also thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and thy sisters, and all thy father's household into the house. If any go out into the street, his blood shall be on his own head if he perish; but whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our heads, if any man do him harm. But if thou makest known our business we are quit of this our oath.

And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she bound the scarlet line in the window of her house. But the men fled to the mountain, and hid themselves there three days, and after that they returned to Joshua to the camp, and said, Jericho is a strong city, but the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for the inhabitants faint for fear because of us.

The Great Host Crossing the River.

After this the host of the Israelites marched to Jordan. Now at this season of the year Jordan is swollen by the melting of the snows of Lebanon, and overflows all its banks, and the people encamped by Jordan that night. And Joshua sent officers throughout the host, who commanded the people in these words: When ye see the priests take up the ark of the covenant, follow it; but leave a space of a thousand yards' measure between you and it; come not nearer to it, that ye may know the way that ye must go, for such a way ye have not gone before. And Joshua said to the people, Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

When the morrow was come, Joshua said to the priests, Take up the ark and pass over before the people. Then the priests took up the ark, and went before; and all the people left their tents and followed them, leaving a space as had been commanded. And when they that bare the ark came to Jordan, and their feet were dipped in the brim of the waters, then the waters that came from above stood, rising up in a heap, so that the channel was dried from the city of Adam downwards to Jericho, a distance of about eighteen miles, and the waters below, towards the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off. So all the people crossed the river dry-shod, the priests that bore the ark standing in the middle of the river till all the people had crossed over.

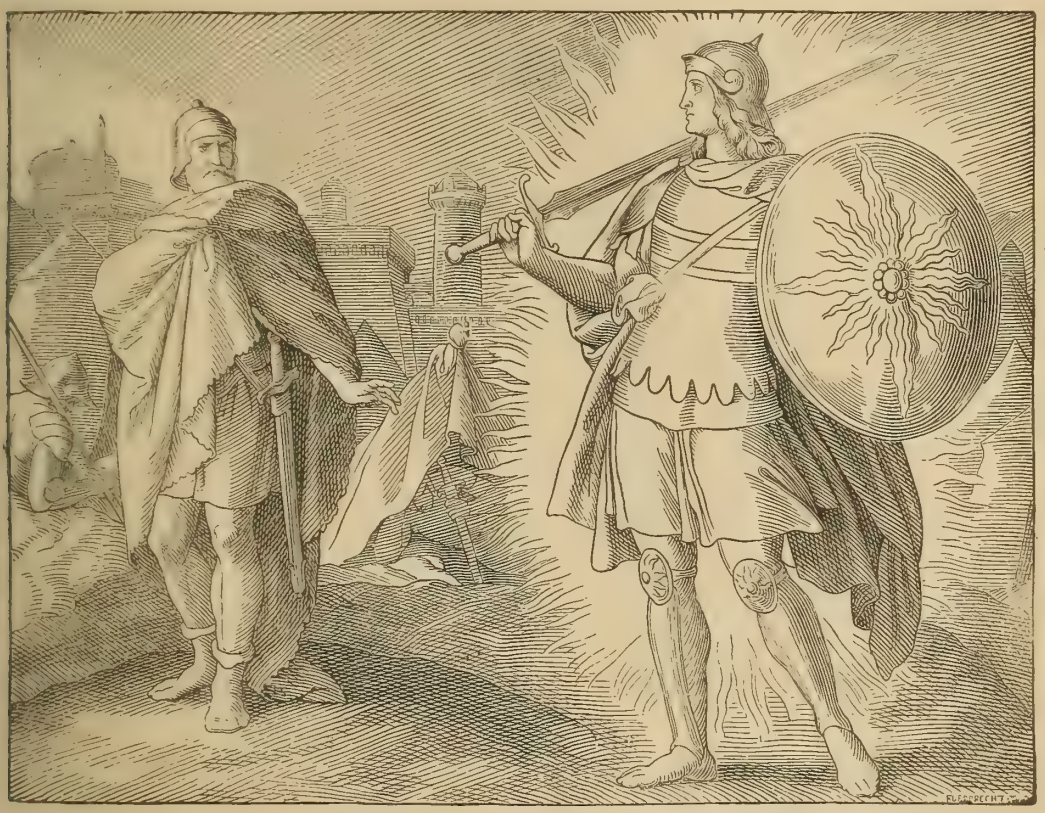
First went the men of Reuben and of Gad and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ready armed for battle, about forty thousand soldiers; and after them the rest of the multitude. And when they had all passed over, Joshua commanded the priests, saying, Come up out of Jordan. And it came to pass when they had come up out of the river, as soon as their feet touched the dry land, the waters of Jordan returned to their places, and flowed over all their banks as they had done before.

Where They Pitched Their Camp.

Of this crossing there were set up, as Joshua commanded, according to the word of the Lord, two memorials. The first was in this manner: Twelve men, one out of each tribe, took up great stones out of Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm, and set them up on the other bank, in the place where the host was to lodge that night. And the second memorial was this: There were set up in like manner twelve stones in the midst of the river in the place where the priests had stood with the ark.

That night the people pitched their camp in the plain that was called Gilgal. This plain was distant five miles from Jordan and two miles eastward from Jericho. Here they

fortified a camp, and here they kept the feast of passover to the Lord. And this was the second passover that Israel kept after they came out of the land of Egypt. Once had they kept it when they were encamped under Mount Sinai, but not again during the eight-and-thirty years of their wanderings in the wilderness. And on the morrow after the passover the people ate unleavened bread



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO JOSHUA.

of the old corn of the land. From that day they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan, and the manna ceased.

And Joshua went up to see the city of Jericho, and to devise how it might be taken. And as he looked he had a vision—a man standing over against him with a drawn sword in his hand. Then Joshua went unto him, and said, Art thou for us or against us? And the man answered, Nay, but as captain of the Lord's host am I come. Then Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. Then the angel told Joshua how he should take the city of Jericho. The manner of taking it was this.

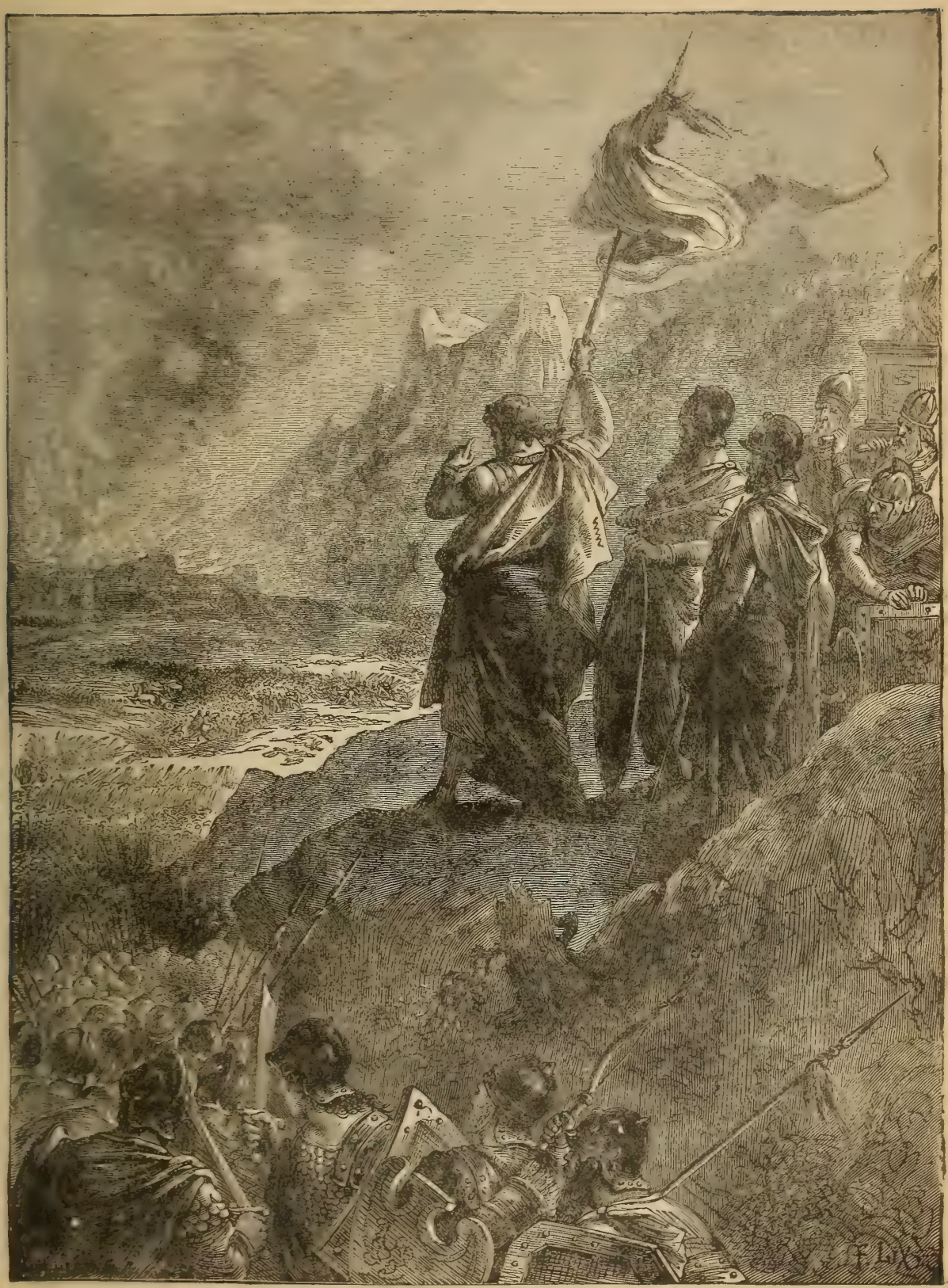
On the first day of the week the whole host of Israel, armed and equipped for battle, marched round the wall. After the host came seven priests blowing on rams' horns, and after these, again, the ark, carried on the shoulders of priests. Behind the ark came a company from the tribe of Dan, for the men

of Dan furnished always the rear-guard of the army. This was done day after day for six days. No shouting was there or cry of battle. Only the priests blew continually with the trumpets. And on the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, the host made this compass of the walls seven times. Six times they made it in silence, but the seventh time, when it was now the time of sunset and the Sabbath was near to its end, all the people shouted together, and the wall fell down, so that the army could go up into the city without hindrance.

FALLING OF THE WALLS OF JERICHO.

Thus Jericho was taken, and all that was in it was destroyed, save only the vessels of gold and silver and brass and iron. These were brought into the treasury of the Lord. And Joshua laid a curse upon any that should build the city again; and the curse was this: that his eldest son should die when he laid the foundation, and his youngest when he set up the gates, and so finished the work.

But when Jericho and its people were utterly destroyed, Rahab and her household were saved, as the spies whom she saved from death had sworn unto her. Rahab was



JOSHUA CAPTURING THE CITY OF AI. 143

married afterwards to Salmon, chief prince of the tribe of Judah. She had a son named Boaz, and Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

The Israelites Defeated.

Now there stood some eight miles westward from Jericho the city of Ai. This city Joshua had it in his mind to take; and he sent men to spy out the place. These brought back the report that the place was small, saying to Joshua, Make not all the people to go up. Let about two or three thousand go up and smite the place, for the inhabitants are but few. This Joshua did, but as the Israelites went up the men of Ai sallied out upon them. And they, not looking to be attacked, turned and fled, and the men of Ai pursued them, and slew some six-and-thirty as they fled, but the rest escaped to the camp.

Great was the dismay among the people at this defeat. As for Joshua, he rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark from morning till evening. So did the elders of the people, and they put dust upon their heads. And Joshua cried to the Lord, Why hast thou brought this people over Jordan to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites? For when the people of the land shall hear that we have fled in the battle before the men of Ai, they will surround us and destroy us.

But the Lord answered him thus, Get thee up; why liest thou upon thy face? Israel has sinned, for they have taken of the accursed thing.

So the next day Joshua bade all the people pass before him by their tribes and families and houses. From the tribes the tribe of Judah was taken, and from the tribe of Judah the house of the Zarhites, and from the house of Zarhites the family of Zabdi, and, last, from the family of Zabdi a certain Achan. Then Joshua said to Achan, My son, make confession to God, and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me.

Achan answered, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. I saw among the spoils of Jericho a goodly mantle from Babylon, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels. These I hid in the earth under my tent, the garment above, and the gold and silver under it.

Achan Stoned to Death.

Then Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and found the things as Achan had said. Then Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And Israel stoned Achan with stones that he died; and his whole house and all his possessions were destroyed. In the place where this was done was raised a great heap of stones, and the place was called from that day the Valley of Trouble.

After this Joshua and the people took courage again, and went up against Ai. But first he set an ambush of five thousand men in the valley between Ai and Bethel (for Bethel is two miles to the westward of Ai), and agreed with them that he and the rest of the host should go up against the city openly from the eastward, and make a pretence of flight. And when we flee, said he, and the men of Ai pursue us, do ye rise up and take the city.

When the king of Ai saw the host of Israel, for it had taken its place on the other side of the valley, he and his people went out against it, knowing nothing of the ambush which had been laid on the other side of his city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before the king of Ai and his people, and fled by the way of the

THE INHABITANTS OF AI WITNESSING THE DEFEAT OF THEIR ARMY.

wilderness—that is to say, towards Jericho and Jordan.

There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel; all pursued after Joshua; and the gates were open. Then Joshua lifted up his spear, and pointed it towards Ai; for this had been agreed upon for a signal. Then the men that lay in ambush rose up and entered the city, and set it on fire. And when Joshua and the host saw the smoke of the city rising up to heaven, they turned against the men of Ai.

At the same time they who had taken the city came down against them from behind. So the men of Ai were taken in the midst of Israel, with the host on one side and the men of the ambush on the other. None could escape. As for the king, he was taken alive; him Joshua hanged upon a tree. When the sun was set Joshua commanded that they should take down his body from the tree and cast it before the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones.

A Shrewd Trick.

When the kings of the Canaanites heard how Jericho and Ai had been destroyed, they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight against Israel; but the men of one of the cities of the Hivites, Gibeon by name, bethought them of a device by which they might save themselves. They sent ambassadors to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal; for Joshua had led the host back to the camp. The men took old sacks upon their asses, and the bottles of skin in which they carried their wine had been torn and sewn again, and their shoes were patched, and their garments old, and their bread dry and mouldy. In this plight they came to Gilgal, and said to Joshua, We are come from a far country: now therefore make a league with us.

Joshua said to them, Peradventure ye dwell near us; how then shall we make a league with you? for our God hath forbidden us to make leagues with the people of this country. Tell us now who are ye, and whence do ye come?

The Gibeonites answered, Thy servants are come from a very far country because of the name of the Lord thy God. For we have heard the fame of him and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites beyond Jordan. Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, Take food with you for your journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, We are your servants: therefore now make a league with us. See now this our bread that we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth is dry and moldy; and these bottles were new, and now they are torn; and our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of our very long journey.

Then Joshua and the elders took of the food which the Gibeonites offered them in token of friendship; and Joshua made a league with them, and the elders confirmed it with an oath.

What Joshua Did with Them.

But three days afterwards they heard that they were their neighbors and dwelt among them. Then Joshua sent an army from the camp to Gibeon, which came to it on the third day. With Gibeon were confederate three cities—Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. The people were wroth with the princes because they had made a league with these cities.

But the princes said, We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; therefore we may not touch them. This will we do; we will let them live, lest wrath come upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto

them. But we will make them hewers of wood and drawers of water to all the people.

Then Joshua said to the Gibeonites, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when in truth ye dwell among us? Therefore ye shall be bondsmen forever. Ye shall hew wood and draw water for us, especially for the house of our God.

The Gibeonites answered, We were afraid. For we had heard that the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Therefore we did this thing. But now we are in thy hand; as it seemeth right and good unto thee to do unto us, do. And Joshua did as he had said.

And when Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard how the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, he was greatly troubled, for Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities. He sent therefore to the other kings that were confederate with him, that is to say, the kings of Hebron, of Jarmuth, of Lachish, and of Eglon; and they and all their hosts

JOSHUA COMMANDING THE SUN TO STAND STILL.

went up, and encamped against Gibeon, and made war upon it.

Then the Gibeonites sent in haste to Joshua, saying, The kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us; tarry not therefore to come up and save us and help us. So Joshua and the bravest of the host came up from the camp at Gilgal. All night they marched, for Gibeon was distant fifteen miles from Gilgal, but the Amorites knew nothing of their coming. And when they came up from out of the valley on to the plain before Gibeon, the enemy was sore dismayed, and turned their backs, and fled.

Pursuing the Enemy.

Some of them fled to Beth-horon, and some to their own cities. Those that took the road to Beth-horon fled with all speed down the pass that leads from Beth-horon the Upper to Beth-horon the Lower. And as they were on the way, Israel following after them, a great hail-storm fell on them. They were more that died from the hail-stones than they that were slain by the sword. And when Joshua saw the Amorites fleeing down the pass, he feared lest the sun should go down before Israel had made an end of destroying their enemy. Therefore he cried aloud, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And it was so that the light failed not the children of Israel till they had avenged themselves on their enemies.

All the way to Azekah did Israel pursue the Amorites; and as they pursued, it was told Joshua that the five kings had hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. But Joshua would not suffer the people to turn aside nor to cease from their pursuit. Roll, he said, great stones to the door of the cave, and set a guard over it; but stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them. Suffer them not to enter into their cities, for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand.

So the people stayed not from the pursuit; nevertheless some of the Amorites escaped into their fortified cities. After this the people returned to Joshua to the camp in peace. None dared to say a word against any of them.

Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring the five kings out of the cave to me. So they opened the mouth of the cave, and brought them out. And he said to his captains and chief men of war, Come near and put your feet on the necks of these men. So they came, and put their feet on the necks of the kings. And Joshua said, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight.

Horses and Chariots.

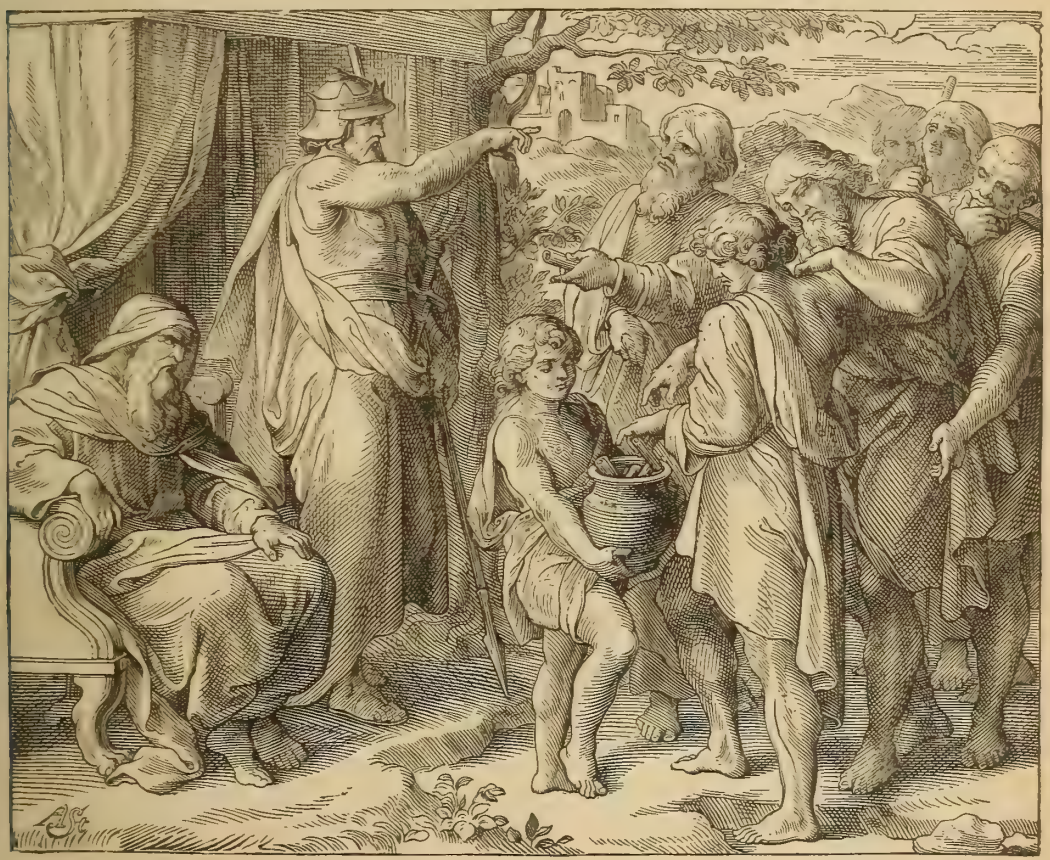
Then he commanded that the kings should be slain and hanged upon five trees. At sunset he bade his people to take down the dead bodies from the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had hidden themselves, and roll a stone to the mouth of the cave. When Joshua had subdued all the country of the south he returned to the camp at Gilgal, and all Israel with him.

When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard these things, he sent to the kings of the north country, and of the plains that lie to the westward of the sea, now the Sea of Galilee, and many others throughout the land, and called them to fight against Israel.

So they assembled their armies by the waters of Merom, a very great multitude, even as the sand that is on the seashore for multitude. Horses and chariots also had they very many. Now of these the children

of Israel had none; nor indeed had they seen them in battle, for the Canaanites of the south were wont to fight on foot.

And the Lord said to Joshua, Be not afraid of them, for I will deliver them into thine hand. And Joshua went up suddenly from Gilgal, and all the men of war with him, and he fell upon the host of Jabin as it lay by the waters of Merom, taking them unawares. The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel. A great multitude were slain, but some escaped to Sidon, and some to Sarepta, and some to Mizpeh, which is under Hermon. All that were overtaken in the flight were slain, and all the chariots burnt with fire, and all the horses were made lame; for so it had been commanded to Joshua, lest perchance the Israelites should seek to use them for war to their own harm. After this Joshua returned to Hazor, and took it, and burnt it with fire. This only of all the cities of the north did Joshua burn with fire, because in those days it was the head of all the kingdoms of that region. Thus



JOSHUA DIVIDING THE LAND.

Joshua conquered the Canaanites in two great battles—the tribes of the south in the Pass of Beth-horon, and the tribes of the north by the Lake of Merom. And both these battles were fought in the year in which the children of Israel crossed the Jordan; but the land was not subdued till seven full years had passed. Nor even

then was it wholly conquered; for the Philistines dwelt in their five cities by the sea, and the Jebusites held the citadel of Jerusalem, and the kings of the northern Canaanites set up their dominion again in Hazor, and elsewhere also the Canaanites dwelt among the children of Israel.

Israel's Inheritance.

At the end of the seven years Joshua divided the land among the tribes; and while he did so, Caleb came to him, and said, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went with me made the heart of the people melt for fear of their report; but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty-and-five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. And yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for my brethren that went with me to espy the land spake of the children of Anak that were there, and of the strong cities in which they dwelt, and made the heart of the people to melt with their report. But if the Lord be with me, I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said. Then Joshua blessed Caleb, and gave him Hebron for an inheritance.

Cities of Refuge.

When the land had been divided, Joshua further appointed six cities, three on either side of Jordan, to which any man might flee who should kill another unwittingly and unawares. Also to the tribe of Levi forty-eight cities were given out of the portions of the tribes.

So Joshua rested from his labors, dwelling in Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim, for this had been given to him for his inheritance; and among all the portions of the children of Israel there was none humbler than his. And when fifteen years had passed, and he knew that his end was now drawing nigh, he sent for the elders of Israel to his house at Timnath, and said to them, I am old and stricken in age. And ye have seen what the Lord hath done for you, how he has driven out the nations of the land before you, and divided the land unto you for an inheritance. Keep, therefore, all that is written in the book of the law of Moses; turn not aside from it to the right hand or to the left.

Go not ye among the nations that remain; make no mention of their gods, but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. If ye will do so, then one of you shall chase a thousand, for it is the Lord your God that fighteth for you. But if ye go among these nations, and serve their gods, then shall they be snares and traps to you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off the good land which the Lord your God hath given you.

Also Joshua called an assembly of all Israel to Shechem. And when he had

brought to their minds the great things which the Lord had done for them—how he had brought them over the Red Sea, and destroyed the Amorites that dwelt on the other side of Jordan, and caused Balaam to bless them when Balak king of Moab would have had him curse them, and how he had given them the land of the seven nations westward of Jordan—then he said to them, Choose now whom ye will serve. Will ye serve the Lord, or will ye serve the gods whom your fathers served when they dwelt in Egypt, or the gods of the nations whom the Lord hath driven out before you? As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

All the people answered, God forbid that we should serve other gods; we will serve the Lord who drove out the nations from before us, for he is the Lord our God.

Joshua said, The Lord is a jealous God; if ye forsake him and serve other gods he will consume you, and do you hurt, as he hath done you good. And the people answered again, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. Then Joshua said, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him. And the people said, We are witnesses.

So Joshua made a covenant with the people; and he wrote these words in a book, and laid the book up with the book of the law. Also he took a great stone and set it up under an oak that was by the tabernacle of the Lord, that it might be a memorial of this covenant for ever. This stone, he said, Shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us.

CHAPTER XI.

B. C. 1394.

THE KING OF MOAB SLAIN—DEBORAH JUDGES THE PEOPLE—THE HOST OF SISERA SCATTERED—GIDEON AND THE ANGEL—CHOOSING AN ARMY—THREE HUNDRED WARRIORS—TRUMPETS AND PITCHERS—A GREAT VICTORY—GIDEON'S WICKED SON—CAPTURE OF A CITY—ABIMELECH KILLED BY A YOUNG MAN.

WHEN Joshua had now been dead some seventy years, and the children of Israel had corrupted themselves, making marriages with the remnant of the Canaanites that still dwelt among them, and being led away to worship their gods, Eglon, king of Moab, invaded their land. He crossed the river Jordan, bringing with him, besides his own people, many of the children of Ammon and of the Amalekites. There, on the east side of Jordan, among the palm-groves where Jericho had been, he established his dominion, making the children of Israel that dwelt in those parts pay tribute to him.

But after eighteen years the Lord raised up a deliverer for his people, namely Ehud, the son of Gera, a man of the tribe of Benjamin. This Ehud was of good repute among his brethren, being counted to have in him something of the spirit of the prophets; and they chose him to carry the tribute which they paid year by year to Eglon, king of Moab. Now he had armed himself with a dagger, two-edged, and a cubit long, which he carried on his right thigh, for his right hand was wasted with disease, and he could use his left only.

So Ehud with his followers, for he had two servants with him, came to the fortress where the king dwelt; and when he had left the tribute, he went back to Gilgal, to the place where the men of Moab kept the images of their gods, as though he would have worshipped there. He left his two servants in that place, and so returned to the king. Now Eglon, who was very fat, sat alone in his summer parlor, that for the sake of coolness was built on the roof of his house.

Ehud said, I have a secret errand to thee, O king, making as though he had a message to deliver to him from the gods. The king said to his people, Keep silence. And all his people that were with him went out from his presence, and he was left alone.

A Blow with a Dagger.

Ehud said again, I have a message from God to thee. The king rose up from his seat to receive the message, as one who would show respect. Then Ehud put forth his left hand and drew the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into the king's heart. So deep did he thrust it in, that he could not draw it forth again. Then Ehud went forth

by the private way, locking the doors of the parlor behind him.

After a while the king's servants came, and found the doors of the parlor locked. For a long time they tarried, saying to themselves, The king would be alone. But when they had lost hope that this could be so, they took a key and opened the door; and, behold, their lord was fallen dead upon the earth.

But Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the place of the images, and escaped to Seirath, which was in the land of Ephraim. There he blew a trumpet to call the people together; and when the men of Ephraim knew that Eglon was dead, they came down from the mountain where they dwelt, and Ehud went before them. And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands.

They Could not Escape.

So they went down, and took possession of the fords of Jordan that were between the land of Israel and the land of Moab, and suffered no man to pass over.

But the Moabites, when they saw that their king was dead, would have fled into their own country, but they could not, for the men of Israel had possession of the fords. And the Israelites slew of them ten thousand men at that time, strong men and in good case, all of them, as if they had fed upon the fat of the land. After this the land had rest for four-score years. After Ehud was dead, Jabin, king of the Canaanites, who dwelt in Hazor, near to the waters of Merom, greatly oppressed the children of Israel. He had a host made up of men of many nations, whereof Sisera was captain. The children of Israel could not stand against him or shake off his yoke, for whereas he had nine hundred chariots of iron, they had neither shield nor spear.

For twenty years did he oppress the people, till the land was utterly desolate. They that travelled through it went not by the highways, for these were beset by robbers, but by paths and byways; and the women scarcely dared to draw water from the wells, or the shepherds to water their flocks, for fear of the soldiers that haunted them.

At this time, in a certain valley between Ramah and Bethel, in the same place where Isaac had buried Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah his wife, there dwelt another Deborah, a prophetess, under a palm-tree, that was called the palm-tree of Deborah. To this place the people of Israel came up, and she judged their causes.

An Army on Mount Tabor.

Deborah sent to Barak the son of Abinoam, who dwelt in Kedesh, in the land of Naphtali, saying, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded thee, saying, Take with thee ten thousand men of Zebulun and Naphtali, and go with them to the top of Mount Tabor; and I will draw to thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and with all his multitude?

Barak said unto Deborah, If thou wilt go with me, then will I go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. Deborah answered, I will surely go with thee: nevertheless the journey that thou takest shall not be for thy honor, for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman. So she arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Then Barak sent throughout the land of Israel, calling upon the people to follow him, that they might do battle together against the oppressors. Some there were that answered to the call from among the Ephraimites and the men of Benjamin, from Manasseh also, and the princes of Machir. The men of Reuben held council about the

matter, but in the end did not come; neither did they that dwelt in Gilead, nor they of Asher, nor they of Dan. But of all the tribes there were none that bore themselves so bravely as Zebulun and Naphtali: they were a people that bravely risked their lives unto the death.

Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from his people, and had pitched his tent near Mount Tabor. The Kenites were of the kindred of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses; and they had kept the children of Israel company in their wanderings in the wilderness, and had crossed over Jordan with them, and dwelt in the wilderness of Judah. This Heber had made peace with King Jabin, and now certain of his people went and showed Sisera that Barak had gone up to Mount Tabor.

Defeat of Sisera.

Therefore Sisera gathered all his chariots together and all his host unto the river Kishon. This Kishon had its rise near to Mount Tabor, and thence flows through the plain till it falls into the Great Sea near to Mount Carmel.

Then Deborah said to Barak, Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak came down from Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men after him. Then the Lord discomfited Sisera and all his chariots and all his host before Barak. The very "stars in their courses fought against him." For a great storm of rain and hail blew in their faces, so that they could not see to shoot with their bows, and their hands were so benumbed with the cold that they could not strike with their swords. The Kishon also was so swollen with the rain that it swept them away. Many perished in the waters, and many were slain with the sword. So the host of Sisera was scattered before Israel, and all the kings of Canaan that had come to the help of Jabin king of Hazor. There was not a man left that was not slain or fled not.

Hid in a Tent.

Then Sisera, when he saw that the battle was lost, lighted down from his chariot, and fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for their was peace between Heber and Jabin. But Barak pursued after the chariots and after the host till he came to their camp. When Jael saw Sisera she came out of her tent to meet him, and said to him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her in the tent, she covered him with a mantle.

Sisera said to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty. Thereupon she opened the bottle of milk, newly taken from the flocks, that stood in the tent, and brought it to him in the best cup as to an honored guest. And when he had drunk she covered him again.

He said to her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

But when he was asleep, Jael, Heber's wife, took in her left hand one of the great nails of iron wherewith the ropes of the tent were fastened, and in her right hand the hammer with which they were driven into the ground, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail through his temples fastening it into the ground. And he moved not, for he was fast asleep and weary.

And, behold, as Barak pursued after Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he

came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. So God subdued that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and he delivered them into the hand of the Midianites. For the space of seven years did the Midianites oppress them, so that they made places of refuge for themselves among the mountains, in the hollows of the watercourses, and in caves and in rocks that were steep and hard of access. Every year, when the men of Israel had sown their fields, and the fruits of the ground were now growing ready for the harvest, did the Midianites come up, and with them also the Amalekites and other tribes of the desert.

They crossed the Jordan by Beth-shean, and made their encampment in the land, and destroyed all the increase of it. All the plain country they wasted from the valley of Jezreel as far as Gaza, and left no living creature on the face of the earth, neither goat, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents.

They were as locusts for multitude, for both they and their camels were without number; and they entered the land to destroy it. Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

Gideon Threshing Wheat.

And when they cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, the Lord sent a prophet unto them, who said unto them:

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove out the inhabitants of this land from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

For the Lord would have had them put away the false gods from among them, that so he might deliver them from the hand of their enemies.

Now there dwelt in Ophrah of Manasseh a certain Joash, of the house of Abiezer. The Midianites had slain his sons, having taken them at Mount Tabor, where they had gone to meet the princes of Israel at the sanctuary that was on the top of the mount. Only Gideon was left to him. This Gideon was threshing wheat with a flail in the wine-press, doing it secretly for fear of the Midianites.

What the Angel Said.

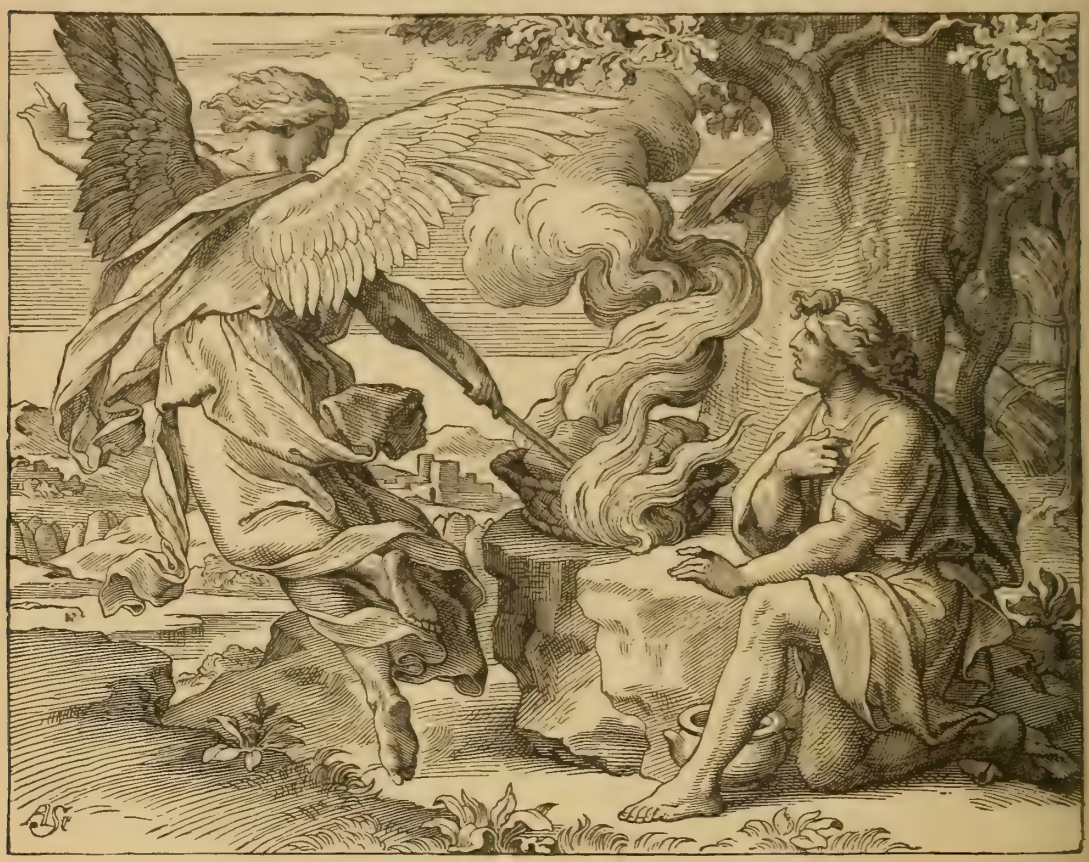
There came an angel of the Lord and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, and appeared unto him, and said, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

Gideon said, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with me, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles that our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring you up out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites.

The Lord said unto him by his angel, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee? And Gideon said, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is the meanest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

The Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as though they were but one man. And Gideon said unto the Lord, If I have found

grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou dost in truth talk with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring my meat-offering, and set it before thee. Then Gideon went in and made ready a kid of the goats, and made unleavened cakes of flour: the flesh he put in a basket and the broth in a pot, and he brought



GIDEON'S OFFERING BURNT BY FIRE FROM THE ROCK.

out the offering unto the angel as he sat under the oak, and presented them.

The Angel of Jehovah said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon the rock, and pour out the broth over the offering upon the rock. And Gideon did so.

Then the Angel of the Lord put out the staff that was in his hand, for he had the

semblance of a traveller, and touched the flesh and unleavened cakes, and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight And when Gideon perceived that he was indeed an Angel of the Lord, he said, Alas, O Lord God! because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built a memorial of that which he had seen unto the Lord; and he called the name of the place Jehovah-Shalom, which being interpreted is, Jehovah send peace.

And it came to pass that same night that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father's

young bullock, and the seven-year-old bullock also, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and break down the idol that is by it. And put the stones of the altar and the wood of the idol on the bullocks, and so carry them to the top of the rock. There shalt thou build with the stones an altar to the Lord thy God, and lay the wood of the idol in order upon the altar, and slay the second bullock, and offer it for a burnt-offering with the wood of the idol.

He Did it by Night.

So Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him; but because he feared the house of his father, even the sons of Abiezer, and the men of the city, for these were Amorites, he did the thing by night, and not by day.

And when the men of the city rose up early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the idol that stood by it was cut down, and there was another altar built, and on this the seven-year-old bullock had been offered. And the men said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And so one said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing.

Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son that he may die; because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and hath cut down the image that was thereby.

And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death while it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because some one hath cast down his altar.

That day was Gideon called "Jerubbaal," that is to say, Let Baal plead with him, because he had cast down the altar of Baal.

The year following, when the Midianites and Amalekites and the tribes of the desert came, as their custom was, with a great multitude, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and all the house of Abiezer assembled to his call. Then he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they also gathered themselves together to him: also he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali, and they came up to meet him.

And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once. Let it be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground beside let there be dew. And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

Choosing the Army.

Gideon, when he had received these two signs from the Lord, rose up early, and pitched his camp above the fountain of Harod, that was at the foot of Mount Gilboa; so that the host of the Midianites were on the north of them, in the valley beneath, hard by the hill of Moreh.

Then the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now, therefore, proclaim in the ears of the

people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early to his own home. And there departed of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be that those of whom I say, This shall go with thee, he shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I shall say, This shall not go with thee, he shall not go with thee.

So Gideon brought the ten thousand to the water; and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; and every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink, by himself.

They that drank warily, taking up of the water with their hands, and lapping from their hands, lest they should be caught unawares by an enemy coming from behind, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees, and dipped their heads into the water, and drank their fill, not heeding what might happen.

The Valiant Three Hundred.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand. Let the rest of the people go every man to his own place.

Then the three hundred took from them that departed such victuals as they required, and also a trumpet for each, and a pitcher. The rest of the people Gideon sent away every man to his own tent; but the three hundred he kept; and the host of the Midianites was in the valley beneath.

And that same night the Lord said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou still fear to go down against them, then go with Phurah thy servant to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterwards thy hand shall be strengthened to go down against the host of the enemy.

So Gideon went down with Phurah his servant to the camp of the Midianites, to where the armed men lay by themselves on the side that was nearest to Mount Gilboa. And the Midianites, with the Amalekites and the tribes of the desert, lay along in the valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore for multitude.

A Strange Dream.

When Gideon and his servant were come to the outskirts of the camp they heard two men talking. One man told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread, so vile that no man would eat it, tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto the tent of the captain of the host, and smote it so that it fell and lay along on the ground.

His fellow answered him, and said, This is nothing else than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath the Lord delivered Midian, and all his host.

When Gideon heard how the one man told his dream, and how the other interpreted it to him, he worshipped the Lord, and returned to his people, and said, Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

And he divided his three hundred into three companies; and he put into every man's hand a trumpet and an empty pitcher, and in each pitcher a firebrand. One company he took for himself; the other two he

put each under a captain; and he sent them to different sides of the camp. But first he said to them, Look on me, and do likewise. When I am come to the outside of the camp, as I do so, shall ye do also. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on the sides of the camp where ye shall be, and cry, THE SWORD OF THE LORD AND OF GIDEON.

GIDEON'S VICTORY OVER THE MIDIANITES.

So Gideon and the hundred men that were with him came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, and the Midianites had but newly set the watch. This would be about half past ten o'clock at night by our time. Then Gideon and his men blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers in which the torches were hidden; and the other companies did the same on their side of the camp. They all blew with their trumpets, holding them in their right hands, and the torches they held in their left; and they cried, THE SWORD OF THE LORD AND OF GIDEON. Every man of them stood in his place round about the camp; and all the host of the Midianites ran to see what had happened, and they cried out for fear, and fled

And as the three hundred still blew with their trumpets, there came a great terror from the Lord on the host of the Midianites; and every man turned his sword against his fellow throughout all the host. And they fled towards the Jordan, to escape into their own land. Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying to his brethren, the men of Ephraim, Come down against the Midianites, and occupy the streams that flow

into Jordan, or ever they can cross them. Meanwhile he, and his three hundred with him, followed after the Midianites till they came to Jordan; and they crossed over to the other side, faint, yet pursuing the enemy. And when he came to Succoth, which is in the land of Gad, he said to the men thereof, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they are faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

And the princes of Succoth said, Are Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hands, that we should give bread unto thy army? Then Gideon said, Therefore, when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

From Succoth, which was in the valley of Jordan, he went up to Penuel, which was in the hill-country, and spoke to them as he had spoken to the men of Succoth; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. Then he said to them, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. Now the men of Ephraim had taken at the fords two princes of the Midianites. Oreb they slew at a rock that was called in after days the rock Oreb, and Zeeb by a wine-press that was named the wine-press of Zeeb; and they brought the heads of the two princes to Gideon when he was on the other side of Jordan.

The Princes are Captured.

And they said to him, What is this thing that thou hast done to us, in that thou calledst us not when thou wentest out to fight against the Midianites? And they reproached him very sharply.

Then Gideon said, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the whole vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. What was I able to do in comparison of you? When he had spoken their anger against him was abated.

Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, which was in the wilderness, in the land of the people that dwelt in tents. They had fifteen thousand men with them, all that were left of the host of the tribes of the desert; for there had fallen an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew the sword. And Gideon came up against them, falling upon them unawares, and discomfited their host. Gideon returned from the battle before sunrise, and caught a young man of Succoth, and inquired of him. And the young man wrote down for him the names of the princes of Succoth, and of the elders, even threescore and seventeen men. Then he came to the city, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, Are Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hands, that we should give bread to thy men that are weary?

Punished with Thorns and Briers.

And he took the elders of the city and punished them, tearing their flesh with thorns and briers. After this he went to Penuel, and beat down the tower, and slew the men of the city.

Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Mount Tabor? They answered, As thou art, so were they; each one was like the child of a king.

He said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his first-born son, Up, and slay them. But Jether drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet but a boy.

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, Rise thou, and fall on us; for as the man is, so is his strength. Then Gideon rose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments shaped as a half-moon, that were on their camels.

The men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, thou and thy son after thee, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us out of the hand of the Midianites.

Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you. Also he said unto them, I would desire this of you, that ye give me every man the nose-rings that ye have taken from the slain. For the men had golden nose-rings, as was the custom with their nation. And they answered, We will willingly give them. Then Gideon spread out his soldier's cloak, and the men cast therein every man the nose-rings that he had taken from the slain.

Gideon also had for himself the ear-drops, and the ornaments, and the purple clothing of the kings of Midian, and the chains that were about the necks of their camels. Then Gideon took the gold and made with it an ephod—that is to say, a high priest's robe with a breastplate, and other things appertaining thereto, and put it in his city, even Ophrah, that the people might not resort to Shiloh, but might come to Ophrah, where they would inquire of the Lord. And this thing became an occasion of sin to Israel, and turned to the destruction of Gideon's house.

The Story of Abimelech.

So Gideon dwelt at Ophrah in his own house after he had subdued Midian. For forty years he dwelt there and judged Israel, and the country was in quietness all his days. Gideon had a son that was borne to him by a Canaanitish woman of Shechem. Him he called Abimelech. And Gideon died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father in Oprah.

But when he was dead the children of Israel went again after strange gods, and worshipped Baal-berith, whose temple was in Shechem. And they remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side; neither showed they kindness to the house of Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel.

After Gideon was dead Abimelech his son went to Shechem, unto the brethren of his mother, and communed with them and their kindred, saying, Speak, I pray you, these words in the ears of the men of Shechem, Is it better for you that all the sons of Gideon, that is to say, threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? And remember that I am your brother.

The brethen of Abimelech's mother spoke all these words concerning him in the ears of the men of Shechem; and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother.

Parable of the Trees.

And they gave him three score and ten shekels of silver out of the temple of Baal-berith, and with this money Abimelech hired certain men, vain and idle, to follow him; and went unto the house of his father in Ophrah, and slew there all his father's sons, even threescore and ten persons, upon one stone. Only one of the seventy was left, Jotham, the youngest son, for he hid himself.

Then all the men of Shechem gathered themselves together, and they that dwelt in the stronghold of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king by the oak of the garrison of Shechem.

And when they told Jotham what had

been done, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the Olive tree said unto them, Shall I leave my fatness, wherewith by my means they honor both God cheereth God and man, and go to be king over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the thorn, Come thou, and reign over us.

And the thorn said unto the trees, If ye do well to anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; but if ye have not done well, then shall fire come out of the thorn, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

A WOMAN CASTS A STONE UPON ABIMELECH.

and man, and go to be king over the trees?

Then the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. And the fig tree said unto them, Shall I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit and go to reign over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Shall I leave my wine, which

Now, therefore, if ye have done well and honestly in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt justly with Gideon and his house, and done unto him as he deserved of you (for remember that my father fought for you, and did venture his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; and yet ye have risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons,

threescore and ten persons, on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant, king, because he is your kinsman)—if then ye have dealt justly with the house of Gideon, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if ye have done well, then shall fire come from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem and the fortress of Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem, and from the fortress of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

Robbers on the Mountains.

Then Jotham fled, and dwelt at Beerith, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

When Abimelech had had dominion over Israel for three years, God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech. This he did that the cruelty done to the sons of Gideon might be punished, and that their blood might be upon the head of Abimelech their brother, and upon the heads of the men of Shechem, who had strengthened his hands to kill his brethren.

The men of Shechem set men to lie in wait for the officers of Abimelech on the top of the mountains. These robbed all that came by; and the thing was told to Abimelech.

Then one Gaal, the son of Ebed, went with a company of his kinsfolk to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him; and they went out into their fields, and gathered in their vintage, and trod the grapes, and sacrificed thank-offerings, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech.

And Gaal said, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him, and Zebul his officer, that we should serve them? Let the princes of the Canaanites serve Abimelech, for he is of their kindred. Would to God that I were ruler in this place! Then would I remove Abimelech out of it.

When Zebul, who was ruler of the city under Abimelech, heard these words of Gaal, his anger was kindled, and he sent messengers secretly to Abimelech, saying, Behold, Gaal and his brethren are come to Shechem; and, behold, they stir up the city against thee. Now, therefore, come by night, thou and the people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field. For Gaal and his company go out to-morrow on a certain business. When, therefore, they are gone, do thou, as soon as the sun is up, set upon the city; and when Gaal and his company come back, thou canst do to them as thou shalt find occasion.

Ready for the Attack.

So Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies.

Now, very early in the morning, Gall went out and stood in the gate of the city, preparing to go as he had purposed. But while he stood there Abimelech and the people that were with him rose up from lying in wait; and Gaal saw them. Then he said to Zebul the governor, Behold, there are people that come down from the top of the mountains.

But Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadows on the mountains, and thinkest them to be men. And Gaal spake again and said, Surely there are people that come down by the hollow in the mountains, and others again by the oak of the soothsayers. Then said Zebul, Where are now thy boastings that thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Lo, these men whom thou seest are they whom thou hast so despised. Go out now, and fight with them.

So Gaal went out at the head of the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

And Abimelech vanquished him. And many were slain and many wounded before they could reach the gate of the city. But Abimelech could not on that day enter into the city, but abode at Arumah; and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his people, that they should not dwell in Shechem any more. On the morrow the men of Shechem went out again into the field. And Abimelech had been told this thing by Zebul his captain, and he took his people and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field as before. And when the people came forth from the city, he rose up against them and smote them. And he and his own company made haste to the city, and stood in the gate; and the other two companies ran upon all that were in the fields, and slew them. All that day Abimelech fought against the city; and he took it, and slew the people that were therein, and destroyed the city, and sowed the ground with salt. But when the men that were in the tower of Shechem, which is the fortress of Millo, saw what was done, they entered into the temple of Baal-berith, and fortified themselves there.

ABIMELECH SLAIN BY HIS ARMOR-BEARER.

When Abimelech heard of this, he and his people went up to Mount Zalmon. He took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from a tree, and laid it on his shoulder, and said to the people, Make haste, and do what ye have seen me do.

So every man cut down his bough as Abimelech had done, and carried them to Shechem, and piled up these against the hold, and so set fire to it. And all there were in the tower of Shechem died also—about a thousand men and women.

After this Abimelech went to Thebez, and encamped against it, and took it. Now there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women of the city, and shut to the gates, and went up to the top of the tower. Then Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went close up to the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech, and broke his skull. Then he called hastily out to the young man his armour-bearer, and said, Draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And the young man his armor-bearer thrust him through, and he died.

Thus did God recompense the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: and all the evil of the men of Shechem did God recompense to them; and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Gideon, for in very truth the fire came out of the thorn which they had chosen to be their king, and they were plagued thereby.

CHAPTER XII.

B. C. 1187.

JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER—AN ANGEL COMES TO MANOAH—BIRTH OF SAMSON—THE SLAIN LION—HONEY FROM A STRANGE SOURCE—A HARD RIDDLE TO GUESS—JACKALS IN THE CORN—SAMSON BREAKS HIS BONDS—THE GIANT LOSES HIS STRENGTH—THE CUNNING TRICK OF DELILAH—PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE FALL—DEATH OF SAMSON.

AS SOON as Gideon was dead the children of Israel returned to their wicked ways. In the course of time the Ammonites made war against Israel. And the children of Israel sent for a man named Jephthah, a skillful warrior, to be their captain, and lead them forth to battle.

Jephthah said he would go with them if they would promise to make him a prince and a ruler in the land. This they said they would do, and Jephthah took his place as captain at the head of the army of Israel. But before he left his home in Mizpeh, Jephthah vowed a vow to the Lord, and said, If thou wilt deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, I will offer up as a burnt offering whatever comes out of my house to meet me, when I return to my home in peace.

Jephthah fought against the Ammonites and overthrew them, and afterwards departed for his home in Mizpeh. As he drew near his house, the one that came forth to meet him was his own daughter, his only child, in whom his heart was bound up. She, with her fair companions, came to meet the returning hero, with timbrels in hand and with songs and dances.

As soon as Jephthah saw her, he rent his robes, and cried out, Alas my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, for I have given my word to the Lord, and cannot take it back. Nor did she ask it. She replied that he must do to her according as he had promised the Lord, who had given him the victory. Only, she said, let me alone for two months, that I may go up and down the mountains, I and my companions, and lament my fate.

He Keeps His Vows.

Jephthah granted her request, and at the end of two months she came back to her father, and he sacrificed her according to the vow he had made. And it became a custom for the daughters of Israel to mourn over the daughter of Jephthah for four days in every year. And Jephthah judged Israel for six years, and when he died he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

At Zorah, in the inheritance of the children of Dan, whose lot had fallen to them between the wilderness of Judah on the east and the plain of the Philistines on the west, there dwelt a certain man whose name was Manoah. In those days the Philistines had dominion over all the south of the land of Israel—that is to say, over Dan and Judah and Simeon.

Now this Manoah had no children; and on a certain day the Angel of the Lord appeared to his wife, and said to her, Behold, thou shalt bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor any strong drink, and eat not any unclean

thing. And let no razor come upon the head of the son whom thou shalt bear: for he shall be a Nazarite unto God; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

The woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an

thou didst send come again, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the Angel of God came again unto the woman, as she sat in the field; but her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed the

JEPHTHAH MEETING HIS DAUGHTER.

Angel of God, very terrible; but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: but he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God to the day of his death.

Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my God, let the man of God whom

thing to her husband, and said, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.

Then Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came unto the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.

The Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her

beware. She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

Manoah Offers a Kid.

And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, till we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, yet will I not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Manoah knew not that he was an Angel of the Lord.

And Manoah said, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honor. The Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?

So Manoah took a kid with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord: and the Angel of the Lord did a wondrous thing; for it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, that, as Manoah and his wife looked on, the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife fell on their faces to the ground; but the Angel of the Lord appeared to them no more. Then Manoah knew that he was an Angel of the Lord.

And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things concerning the child that should be born.

In due time the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson, which is by signification "the sun." And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him; and his Spirit came upon him at the camp of Dan, that is between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Now there was on the plain below Zorah—for Zorah stands upon the hills—a certain village named Timnath. It was a village of the inheritance of Dan; but the Philistines dwelt there at this time. Samson went down thither, and saw a woman of the daughters of the Philistines that pleased him. Then he came up to Zorah, and said to his father and his mother, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now, therefore, get her for me to wife.

Seeking a Wife.

Then his father and his mother said to him, Is there never a woman among all the daughters of thy brethren that are of the same tribe with thee, nor yet of the other tribes of Israel, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?

Then Samson said to his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that the thing was of the Lord, that their son might find occasion against the Philistines; for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath. But Samson parted from his company, going by the way of the vineyards. And as he went, behold a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid, and this though he had no weapon in his hand. But he told not his father and his mother what he had done. After this he went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased him well.

When the days of betrothal were ended, he came again from Zorah with his father and his mother to take his wife. And as he

JEWISH MAIDENS MOURNING WITH JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

went he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion; and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came again to his father and his mother, and he gave to them, and they did eat. But he told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of a lion.

garments of linen, and thirty upper garments. But if ye cannot find it out, ye shall give me thirty garments of linen, and thirty upper garments.

They said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. He said, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.

SAMSON SLAYING THE LION.

When he had come to the woman's house, he made a feast for his friends and neighbors, for so used a bridegroom to do; and there were thirty of the Philistines that came to be his companions.

On the first day of the feast Samson said to them, I will now put forth a riddle to you: if ye can find out the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty under

For three days they sought to expound the riddle, and could not. On the fourth day, which was the seventh day of the week, they said to Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he tell thee the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye invited us to this feast to rob us of our goods?

Then Samson's wife wept before him, and

said, Thou dost but hate me, and not love me; for thou hast put forth a riddle to the children of my people, and hast not told it to me. He said unto her, I have not told it to my father and my mother, and shall I tell it to thee?

But she wept before him so long as the feast continued; and it came to pass on the seventh day that he told her, because she was urgent with him. And she told the riddle to the children of her people.

So the men of the city, that were his companions in the feast, said to him on the seventh day, before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion? But he said, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

His Wife Given to Another.

And he went down to Ashkelon, which was one of the five cities of the Philistines, and there slew thirty men, and took their spoil, and gave the garments to them that had expounded the riddle.

And his anger was kindled against his wife, and he went back to his father's house. Then was his wife given to the chief of the thirty companions, a man whom he had used as his friend.

A little while after, when it was now wheat harvest, Samson came down to see his wife, bringing with him a kid for a gift. Her father said, I thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion. But her younger sister is fairer than she; take her to wife, I pray thee, instead of her. When Samson knew that he had been robbed of his wife, he said, Now, though I do these Philistines an injury, yet shall I be more blameless than they.

Then he went and caught three hundred jackals, and tied them two and two together, tail to tail, and put firebrands in the midst, between the tails; and when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up the standing corn, and that which had been cut, and stood in sheaves, and the vineyards also, and the olives.

Death by Fire.

Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? The men of the place answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the man of Timnath, because his wife hath been given to another. Then the Philistines came up to Timnath and burnt the man's house with fire, and the man and his daughter in it. Samson said, I will be avenged of you for this, and after that I will cease.

Then he went out against them, and with the jawbone of an ass smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. When he had done this, he went and hid himself in a cavern that there was in the hill of Etam, which belonged unto Judah. Then the Philistines went up, and pitched their camp in the land of Judah. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? They answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

Then three thousand men of Judah went to the cavern that was in the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us? He said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

Then they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. Samson said unto them, Swear that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. For he would not willingly lift up his hand against the men of his own people. They spoke unto him,

saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines; but surely we will not kill thee.

He Breaks the Cords.

So they bound him with two new cords, and carried him up from the cave in the rock, and brought him, bound as he was, to the place where the Philistines were encamped.

When the Philistines saw him, they shouted against him in their rage; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightly upon him; and the two new cords that were upon him became as flax that hath been burnt with fire, and his bands were loosed from off his hands.

And he found the new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew therewith a thousand men. And he said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

After he had wrought this great slaughter he was sore athirst, and called unto the Lord, and said, Thou hast granted to Thy servant to work this great deliverance; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

As he looked, he saw a spring of water that came from a hollow in the rock, and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived. Wherefore he called the name of that spring "En-hakkore," which is by interpretation, "the fountain of him that calleth." After this Samson judged Israel twenty years.

At the end of twenty years Samson loved a woman of Gaza, which is one of the five cities. And when he went to visit her, it was told the men of Gaza, saying, Samson is come hither. Then they made fast all the gates of the city, and laid wait for him all night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

And Samson lay till midnight; and at midnight he arose, and, coming to one of the gates of the city, took up the two posts, and the folding-doors that were upon them, and the bar that joined them together, and put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the hills that were between Gaza and Hebron.

Story of Delilah.

After this he loved a woman that dwelt in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. The lords of the five cities of the Philistines came to her and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver.

Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and how thou mightest be bound. Samson said, If they bind me with seven green osiers which have not been dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

Then the lords of the Philistines brought to her seven green osiers that had never been dried, and she bound him with them. Now there were men lying in wait, in the very chamber with her; so when she bound him, she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson! And he brake the osiers as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

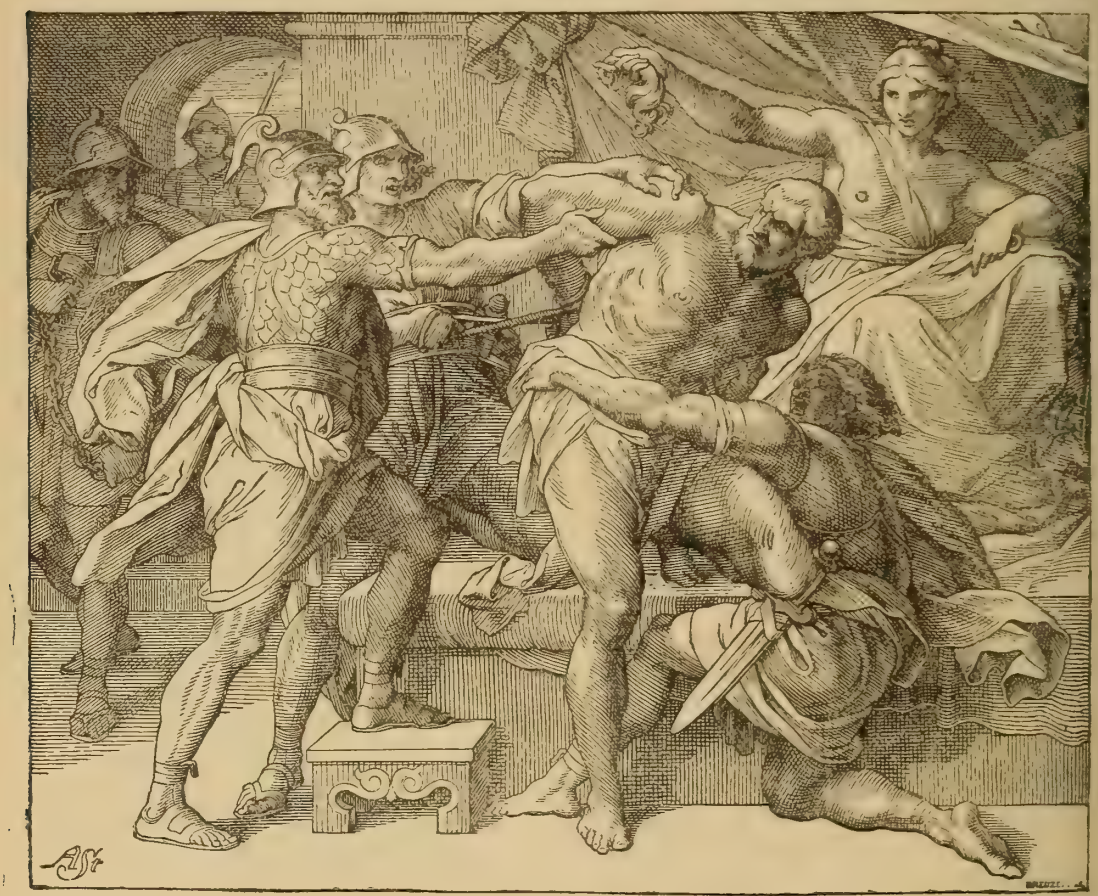
After awhile Delilah said to Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest in truth be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never before have been used, then

shall I be weak, and be as another man. Delilah, therefore, took new ropes and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson! And there were, as before, men that laid wait in the chamber. Then Samson brake the new ropes off his arms as if they had been a thread. Yet again Delilah said to Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies; tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. He said unto her, Thou canst do it if thou weavest the seven locks of my hair into the web of thy loom, and fastenest them with the pin to the wall. For his hair was long and hung down in seven locks.

So Delilah wove the locks into the web, and fastened them with the pin to the wall. Then she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson! And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the web into which his hair was woven, and the pin, and the beam itself.

Once again she said to him, How canst thou say I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.

And when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed unto death, he told her all his heart, and said, There hath not come a razor on my head; for I have been a Nazarite unto



SAMSON CAUGHT AND BOUND BY HIS FOES.

God: if I be shaven, then will my strength go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up again yet this once, for he hath showed me all his heart.

Then the lords of the Philistines came up and brought their money in their hand. And Delilah made Samson to sleep with his head upon her knees, and as he slept she caused a man to cut off the seven locks of his head. So she robbed him of his strength. Then she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson! And he woke out of his sleep, and said, I will go as before, and shake myself. For he knew not that the Lord had departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass, and made him grind at the mill in the prison-house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

The Death of Samson.

Then the lords of the Philistines gathered themselves together to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

And Samson was brought out to the people, and when they saw him they praised their god, for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And when they had feasted and their hearts were merry, they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And he made them sport, for they jeered at him, and buffeted him, and he could not resist; and they set him between the pillars, for all to see.

Then Samson said unto the lad that led him by the hand, Suffer me to feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and besides them that were in the house, there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women that beheld while Samson made sport.

And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once more, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes that they have put out.

And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and upon which it was supported, of the one with his right hand and of the other with his left; and Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead whom Samson slew at his death were more than they whom he slew in his life.

Then his kinsmen and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the sepulchre of Manoah his father.

CHAPTER XIII.

B. C. 1312.

A Famine at Bethlehem—Naomi Returns from Moab—Ruth Cleaves to her Mother-in-law—Gleaners in the Harvest Field—Ruth at the Feet of Boaz—The Shoe Given to a Neighbor—Ruth Becomes the Wife of Boaz.

DURING the time of the Judges, when Eli was high-priest, there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to stay a while in the land of Moab, he and his wife and his sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi. And they came into the country of Moab and sojourned there. And Elimelech died, and his two sons took to themselves wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.

And after ten years the sons died, and Naomi was bereaved both of her husband and sons. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return to her own country, for she had heard that God had looked upon his people and given them bread. And Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt kindly with the dead. The Lord grant that each of you may find rest in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept, and said to her, Surely we will return with thee to thy people. But Naomi answered, Return home, my daughters. For I cannot help you, for the Lord hath dealt hardly with me. And they wept again, and Orpah departed, after she had kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave to her. Then Naomi said to her, Behold, thy sister-in-law hath gone back to her people and to her gods; do thou go after her.

But Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

They Arrive at Bethlehem

And when Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfast in her purpose, she sought no more to persuade her. So these two went on till they came to Bethlehem. And when they came, all Bethlehem was greatly moved, for they asked, Can this be Naomi? She said to them, Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara, for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me. He sent me forth full, and he hath brought me back again empty. Now the time when Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem was at the beginning of barley-harvest.

There was in Bethlehem a certain man that was a kinsman of Elimelech. His name was Boaz, and he was very rich. Ruth said to her mother-in-law, Let me now go to the

RUTH AND NAOMI.

field and glean ears of corn after any one in whose sight I may find favor. And Naomi said to her, Go, my daughter. So she went and gleaned in the field, after the reapers; and her hap was to light on that portion of the field which belonged to the man Boaz. And behold Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to his reapers, The Lord be with you! and they answered him, The Lord bless thee!

Then Boaz said to the servant that was over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? The man said, This is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the land of Moab. She said to me, Let me glean after the reapers. So she came, and hath continued from the morning until now, and hath scarcely rested at all. Then Boaz said to her, Go not to glean in another field; abide here, keeping close to my maidens. None shall harm thee. And when thou art thirsty, go to the vessels, and drink of that which the men have drawn.

Ruth Finds a Friend.

When she heard this, she fell on her face before him on the ground, and said, Why dost thou take notice of me, seeing that I am but a stranger? Boaz answered, I have heard all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law, and how that thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and hast come to a people which before thou knewest not. The Lord, under whose wings thou art come to seek refuge, recompense thee for it!

And when the reapers rested for their meal, Boaz said to her, Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. So she sat beside the reapers, and Boaz reached to her grain that had been roasted in the fire, and she ate till she was satisfied; but there remained something over from her portion. And when she rose up to glean again, Boaz said to his men, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not trouble her. Let fall also some handfuls for her, that she may glean them. So Ruth gleaned in the field all the day; and when she had beat out all that was gleaned, she found that it was an ephah, or about twenty-eight quarts, of barley. This she took into the city to her mother-in-law. Also she gave her what had been left over when she ate bread.

Naomi said to her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? Blessed be he that took notice of thee. Ruth answered, The man in whose field I gleaned is Boaz. Then Naomi said, Blessed be the Lord, who has not ceased from his kindness both to the living and the dead. For this Boaz is one of our next kinsman.

Ruth's New Home.

Now it was the law among the Jews that if a man died without children, his nearest kinsman should buy his inheritance and take his widow to wife, so that the name of the dead might not perish out of Israel. Naomi knew that Boaz was near of kin to Elimelech. Whether there was any one nearer she knew not. Ruth said to her mother-in-law, The man said to me that I should keep by his men till they had ended his harvest. Naomi answered, It is well; do so, keep with his maidens, and go not into any other field.

So Ruth kept by the maidens of Boaz till both the barley-harvest and the wheat-harvest were ended. Afterwards Naomi said to Ruth, My daughter, I must see that you find a home. To-night Boaz winnows barley in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thyself, and put on thy best raiment, but take care that the man see thee not until he shall have done eating and

drinking. But when he lieth down, mark the place where he shall lie, and go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And Ruth said to her mother-in-law, All that thou tellest me I will do.

When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn. And Ruth came softly, and lay down at his feet under the covering that was over him. And it came to pass at midnight that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and behold a woman lay at his feet. He said, Who art thou? She answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid. Spread now thy skirt over me, for thou art a near kinsman.

RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELDS OF BOAZ.

Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter. This is well done of thee that thou hast come to me and to none other for help. Fear not, I will do all that thou requirest; for all the city doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman, but there is one that is nearer than I. Tarry here this night; and in the morning, if he will perform the part of a kinsman, well; but if he will not, then will I perform it, as the Lord liveth. Lie down till the morning.

So she lay down, and in the morning, before it was light, so that one could not see the other, she rose up. Then he said, Bring thy veil and hold it. And when she held it, he measured into it six measures of barley, that she might take them to her home. And she told Naomi all that the man had done,

and how he had said, Go not empty to thy mother-in-law. Then said Naomi, Sit still, my daughter, till thou shalt know how the matter will end. The man will not be at rest until he have finished the thing, and that this very day.

In the morning Boaz went to the gate; for there the men of the city were wont to assemble for counsel and converse. And when the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken to Ruth came by, Boaz called to him, Ho, thou! turn aside, and sit down here.

So they sat down. And Boaz said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that has come back from the land of Moab, selleth a portion of land that belongeth to Elimelech that was her husband. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not, then tell me, that I may know. For thou art nearest to the dead, and I am next after thee, and there is none beside.

A Singular Custom.

The man said, I will redeem it. Then Boaz said, When thou buyest the land of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, for she is the widow of Elimelech's son. And her must thou take to wife, that the name of the dead may be preserved in his inheritance. The kinsman said, This I cannot do, lest I mar my own inheritance. I cannot redeem it: redeem it thyself.

Now the custom in Israel was that in a matter of redeeming or exchanging, a man took off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor, as a token that he gave over to him the right that was his own in law. Therefore the kinsman drew off his shoe, and gave it to Boaz, saying, Take the right to redeem the inheritance of Elimelech and his son.

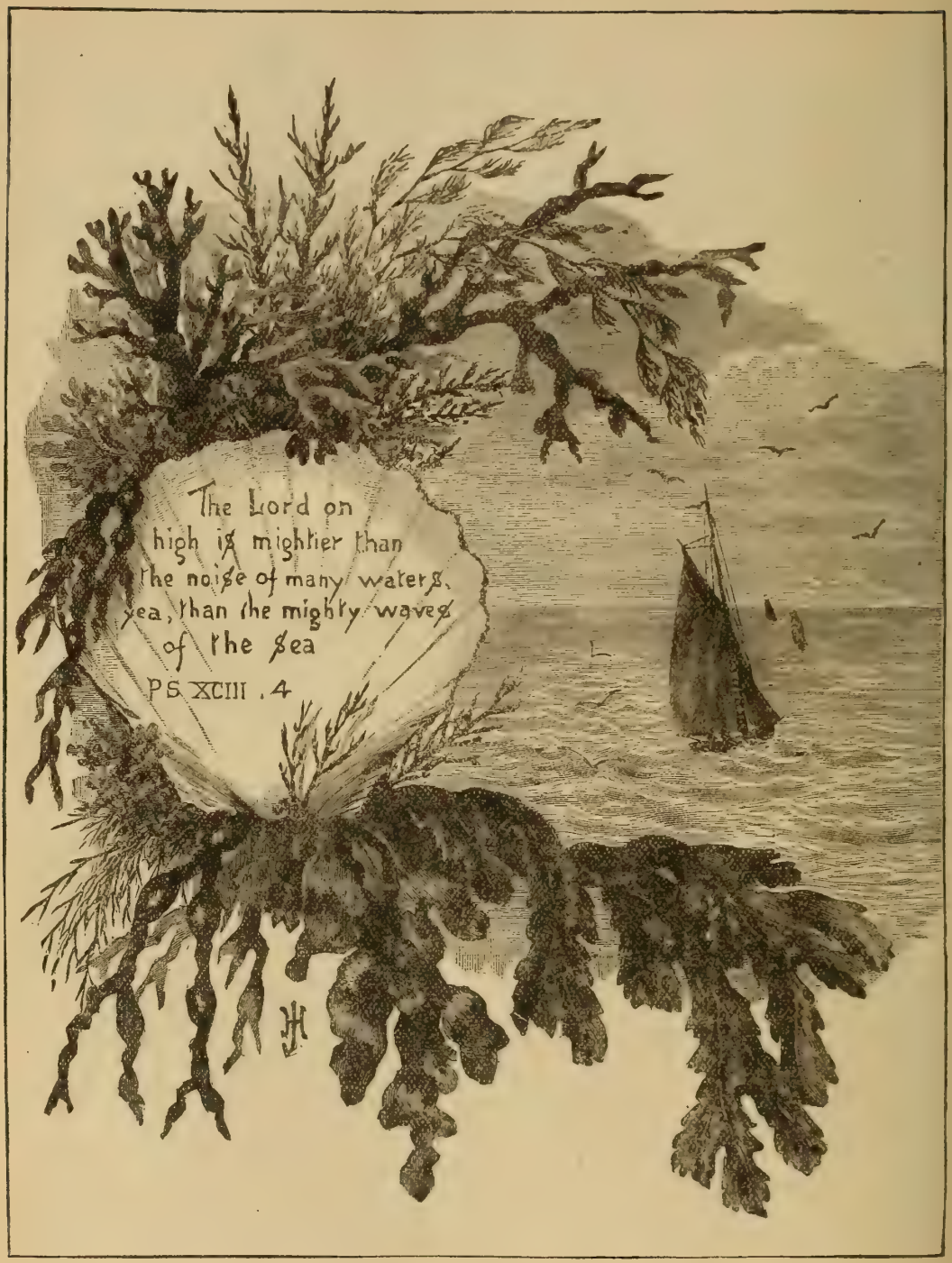
And Boaz said to the elders and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought this day all that was Elimelech's, and his sons', and, moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, that was the wife of one, have I taken to be my wife, that I may raise up the name of the dead in his inheritance. Be ye therefore witnesses of this.

The elders and the people answered, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachael and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.

And Ruth had a son. And the women said to Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left thee without a kinsman, to preserve the name of thy husband and thy sons in Israel. For this child shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thy old age. For thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, and who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women, her neighbors, gave the child a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi, and they called him Obed, which is by interpretation "serving." This Obed was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

THE HARVEST TIME.



THE LORD OF HOSTS.

CHAPTER XIV.

B. C. 1151.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL—HANNAH'S PRAYER—THE BOY HEARS A VOICE CALLING HIM—SUDDEN DEATH OF ELI—TROUBLE WITH THE PHILISTINES—THE ARK CARRIED AWAY—A GREAT VICTORY—SAMUEL SETS UP A STONE—THE ISRAELITES WANT A KING.

UP IN Ramah, which is in the hill-country of Ephraim, there dwelt a certain man of the tribe of Levi, Elkanah by name. He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

This man went up once every year to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts at the tabernacle in Shiloh. (In those days Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, performed the office of high priest, for Eli their father was very old.) And when he had sacrificed, he gave portions to Peninnah his wife, and to her sons and daughters; but to Hannah he gave a double portion, for he loved her, though she was childless. Now Peninnah was wont to provoke Hannah sorely, and to make her to fret, because she had no children. This she did year by year; as often as they went up to the house of the Lord, so often she provoked her; therefore she wept and could not eat. But Elkanah her husband said to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? Why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?

Now, in a certain year when they had sacrificed and had sat down to eat and drink, Hannah rose up quickly from the table, and went to the tabernacle. And Eli the high priest sat upon his throne, by the door of the inner court of the tabernacle.

And Hannah had great bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked how her mouth moved, for Hannah spoke only in her heart; her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And he said, How long wilt thou be druken? Put away thy wine from thee.

Eli's Good Wish.

Hannah said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy daughter for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my sorrowful thought have I spoken.

Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And Hannah

said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. And she went her way, and returned to her husband, where he sat at meat with Peninnah and his children, and did eat, and was no more sorrowful.

The next day they rose up early in the morning, and worshipped the Lord; and afterwards they returned to Ramah. In

THE YOUNG SAMUEL BROUGHT TO ELI.

due time Hannah bare a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, I have asked him of the Lord. The word means that God heard her prayer.

When the time came for Elkanah and his family to go up, after their custom, to Shiloh, Hannah went not up with them, for she said, I will not go up till the child be weaned; and then will I bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and abide in his house all the days of his life. Elkanah her husband said to her, Do what seemeth good to thee; tarry till thou shalt have weaned him; only the Lord perform his promise. So Hannah abode at home till she had weaned her son Samuel.

After she had weaned him she took him up with her to Shiloh, to the tabernacle. She took at the same time a bullock three years old, and an ephah of flour for a burnt-offering, and a bottle of wine. And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And Hannah said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood here near to thee, when thou wast sitting, as now, upon thy throne, and prayed

unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.

The Boy's Coat.

And Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child; and he was girded with an ephod made of white linen, as though he were a priest. His mother also made him a coat; every year she made him a coat, and brought it to him when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And the child grew, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men.

Now the sons of Eli were wicked men; they knew not the Lord, and paid no heed to his law.

As to the peace-offerings, the commandment of the law was this, that the breast and the right shoulder should be the priest's, but that all the fat should be first burnt. But the custom of the sons of Eli was that, when the flesh was in seething, their servant came, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand, and struck it into the pan, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest kept for himself. So they did to all the Israelites that came to Shiloh to do sacrifice.

Also, before he that sacrificed had burnt the fat, the priest's servant came and said to him, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh, but raw. And if any man said, Suffer them to burn the fat immediately, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; the servant would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

And when Eli their father heard of these things and of other wickedness that they did, he said unto them, Why do ye such things? For I hear evil words of you from all the people. Nay, my sons; it is no good report that I hear of you: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall lay a penalty on him, and he shall be free; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Thus did Eli speak unto his sons, but they hearkened not unto him.

What the Prophet Said.

After this there came a man of God, a prophet, to Eli, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Did I not plainly appear unto the house of Aaron thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I not give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be this far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come when I will cut off thy strength, and the strength of thine house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see a rival in my habitation, in all the wealth which I shall give Israel.

And the man of thine house, whom I shall not cut off from thy altar, shall live to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart;

HANNAH VISITING SAMUEL.

and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, namely the thing that shall come on thy two sons, Hophni and Phineas; in one day they shall die, both of them. And I will raise up a faithful priest, who shall do according to that which is in mine heart, and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

Yet once again did the Lord denounce against the sons of Eli the evil that was to come upon them. It was the office of Samuel to open the doors of the tabernacle in the morning and to shut them at night; also to light the seven-branched lamp that stood in the Holy Place when the darkness came, and to extinguish it when it was light, and to trim it, and feed it with fresh oil; and he slept in a chamber hard by the chamber of Eli the priest.

The Lord Calls Samuel.

Now it happened when he was twelve years old that on a certain night, before it was dawn, for the lamp was yet burning in the tabernacle, that the Lord called Samuel as he slept, and Samuel answered, Here am I. And the lad ran to Eli; for Eli was an old man, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, and if he needed anything he was wont to call for Samuel. And Samuel said to Eli, Here am I; for thou calledst me. But Eli said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

The Lord called a second time, Samuel! And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

Now the Lord had never before spoken to Samuel. The Lord called Samuel again. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me.

Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; therefore he said unto him, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee again, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Curiosity of Eli.

And the Lord came and called as before, Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel felt the presence of the Lord, and answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

And the Lord said to Samuel: Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, the which whosoever heareth both his ears shall tingle. In that day I will put over against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the inquity that he knoweth; because his sons brought a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.

And Samuel lay until the morning, when he opened the doors of the tabernacle. And he feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called him, and said, Samuel, my son! Samuel answered, Here am I.

Then said Eli, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide from me any of the things which he said unto thee.

Then Samuel told him all the words that he had heard. He hid nothing from him.

And Eli said, It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that he was established to be a prophet of the Lord; for the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, speaking to Israel by the word of Samuel.

THE CALL OF SAMUEL.

Now it happened not long after these things that the children of Israel rebelled against the Philistines, who had oppressed them for twenty years and more, and went out to fight against them. The children of Israel pitched their camp between Mizpeh and Shen, in the place which was afterwards called Eben-ezer, and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

The Philistines put themselves in array against Israel, and when the battle was joined, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and the Philistines slew of them four thousand men, who fell in the open country where the battle was fought.

When they that had escaped from the battle came back into the camp, the elders of the people held a council; and they said among themselves, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord

from the tabernacle at Shiloh, that it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord, even the Lord who dwelleth between the Cherubim. And the next day the ark was brought into the camp, and the two priests Hophni and Phineas came with it. And when the ark of the covenant came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

A Startling Noise.

And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?

And when they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp they were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods who smote the Egyptians with utter destruction by the Red Sea. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been unto you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent; and the slaughter was very great; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh that same day, with his clothes rent, and with dust on his head. And when he came, lo! Eli, the high priest, sat upon his throne by the gate of the tabernacle watching the road; for his heart trembled for the ark of God.

And when the man came into the city, and told the news of that which had happened, all the city cried out.

And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came hastily to him where he sat, and told him.

Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and he was blind. And the man said unto Eli, I fled to-day out of the army. Eli said to him, What hath happened there, my son?

The messenger answered, and said, Israel fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

And it came to pass, when the messenger made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his throne backward by the side of the door of the tabernacle, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy: and he had judged Israel forty years. And the Philistines came up against Shiloh, and smote it and all the people with the edge of the sword.

What Happened to the Ark.

The Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from the place of the battle to Ashdod. And when they had brought it to Ashdod, they took it into the house of Dagon, and set it by the image of Dagon.

When the men of Ashdod arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon was fallen on his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him up in his place again.

On the next day, when they came early into the temple, behold, Dagon was fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and his head, and both his hands, were broken off, and lay upon the threshold; only the body was left.

Because of this, it became the custom that neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that came into Dagon's house, should tread on the threshold of his house in Ashdod.

But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the men of Ashdod, and smote them with a sore disease. When the men of Ashdod saw that this was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore to the five lords of the Philistines, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And the lords of the Philistines answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried unto Gath.

So they carried the ark to Gath. And the men of Gath suffered as the men of Ashdod had done; and yet more grievously.

A Terrible Destruction.

Therefore they sent the ark to Ekron. And as the ark of God came to Ekron, the men of Ekron cried out, saying, They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

So they sent to the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it slay us not, and our people. For there was a great destruction throughout all the city. The hand of God was very heavy there. They that died not were smitten with disease; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

The ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. And the Philistines inquired of their priests and diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us wherewith we shall send it to its place?

And the priests and the diviners answered, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not without a gift; rather return to the God of Israel a trespass-offering; then shall ye be healed, and ye shall know why his hand hath not been removed from you.

Then said the Philistines, What shall be the trespass-offering that we shall send to the God of Israel?

The priests and the diviners answered, Five golden images of the swellings wherewith ye have been plagued—for the people had been plagued with swellings—and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; for the plague has been upon you, and upon your lords, and the mice have devoured your land. So shall ye give glory to the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? Were not Pharaoh and the Egyptians constrained to let this people go, when their God had wrought great wonders in the land?

They Make a New Cart.

Now, therefore, make a new cart, and take two kine that have calves, on which there hath come no yoke, and harness the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them. Take also the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye send to the God of Israel for a trespass-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; then send the cart with the ark away. If it go up to the borders of the land of Israel, by way of Beth-shemesh, then be sure that it is the Lord who hath done us this great evil; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.

This the Philistines did. They took two kine that had calves, and harnessed them to

a new cart, and tied up their calves at home. And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and other images of gold with them in a coffer by the side of the ark.

And the kine took the straight way to Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them to the borders of Beth-shemesh.

Now the men of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

The cart came into a field that belonged to one Joshua, a man of Beth-shemesh, and the kine stood still by a great stone that was there. So the men of the place took the kine and offered them for a burnt-offering to the Lord, and they clave the wood of the cart wherewith to burn them.

And the priests—for Beth-shemesh was a city of the priests—took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, and put them on the great stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered sacrifices unto the Lord that day. And when the lords of the Philistines had seen what was done, for they had followed after the cart, they returned unto Ekron the same day.

They Die for their Trespass.

But the men of Beth-shemesh looked into the ark; and seventy men of them died for their trespass. Therefore they said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? To whom will he go up from us?

So they sent to the men of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.

So the men of Kirjath-jearim came down to Beth-shemesh, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. For many days, even for twenty years, did the ark of the Lord abide at Kirjath-jearim.

It came to pass after the twenty years that all Israel lamented after the Lord and sought to him. And Samuel spoke to them, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away Baalim and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only. Baalim and Ashtaroth were idols.

And Samuel said, Gather all Israel together unto Mizpeh, and I will pray for you to the Lord.

And the children of Israel gathered together at Mizpeh, and they fasted and confessed their sins, as it was commanded in the law to do on the day of atonement, and afterwards they kept the feast of tabernacles, and the high priest poured the water over the sacrifices as was the custom.

The People are Afraid.

And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. When the lords of the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together in Mizpeh, they went up against them. And when the children of Israel heard of it they were afraid.

And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

Then Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto the Lord, and the Lord answered him. For it came to pass that even as he was offering the

lamb, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; and the Lord thundered with a great thunder that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. For the men of Israel ran down upon them from the hill of Mizpeh, and pursued them, until they came to Beth-car.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

So the Philistines were subdued, and came no more into the land of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the time during which Samuel judged Israel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from the children of Israel were restored to them, along the borders of Ekron and Gath. Also the Amorites that dwelt by Joppa made peace with the Israelites.

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. Every year he went in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpeh. In all these places he judged Israel, and from them he returned to Ramah, for there was his house.

The People Want a King.

Now it happened when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel: one he set at Bethel, and the other at Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after gain, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Also at this time Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, had greatly increased his power; the Philistines also began to invade the borders of the land, and the men of Israel sought for one who should lead their armies against them.

Therefore all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us, even as the nations round about have kings to judge them. But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since I brought them up out of the land of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so they do also unto thee. Nevertheless hearken unto their voice; but protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

What Their King Would Do.

Then Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people that asked of him a king. And he said, These shall be the ways of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest oxen, and your asses, and put them to his work. And he will take the tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye have chosen; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

Nevertheless, the people refused to hear the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and rehearsed them unto the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

CHAPTER XV.

B. C. 1095.

STORY OF SAUL—A VIAL OF OIL—SAUL IS MADE KING—ISRAEL'S ARMY—WAR WITH AMALEK—THE KING'S DISOBEDIENCE—THE TORN MANTLE—AN EVIL SPIRIT—THE SHEPHERD BOY AND HIS HARP—DAVID IS PURSUED—SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR—THE LAST BATTLE—DEATH OF SAUL—WHAT WAS DONE WITH THE KING'S BODY.

THERE dwelt at Gibeah a certain man of the tribe of Benjamin, whose name was Kish. He was a man of substance; and he had a son whose name was Saul, a young man and handsome. There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he. By his head and shoulders he was taller than all the rest of the people.

Now the asses of Kish, the father of Saul, were lost. And Kish said to his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. So Saul passed through the hill-country of Ephraim, and thence through the country of Shalisha, and through Shalim, till they came to the land of Zuph, and found them not. Then said Saul to his servant, Come, let us return; lest my father cease to care for the asses, and take thought for us.

The servant said to him, Behold, there is in this city—for they were now near to Ramah—a man of God, one that is greatly honored. All that he saith surely cometh to pass. Let us now go thither; peradventure he can show us the way which we should go.

Then said Saul, But, behold, if we go, what present shall we take to the man? Even our bread is spent, and we have not a loaf that we can give him. What shall we take him therefore?

The servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here the fourth part of a silver shekel. This will I give to the man of God, that he may tell us our way. Then said Saul to his servant, Thy words are good; come, let us go.

They Meet Young Maidens.

So they went to the city where the man of God dwelt. And as they were going up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

The maidens answered, He is; he has come back to the city this day: make haste, for there is a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place, and if ye go up straightway into the city, ye shall find him before he go up to the high place to eat; for the people will not eat till he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice, and afterward they eat that are bidden. Now therefore get ye up; for about this time shall ye find him.

So they went up into the midst of the city; and when they were come up, Samuel came out of his house and met them, being on his way to the high place.

Now the Lord had told Samuel the day before Saul came, To-morrow, about this

time, will I send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man of whom I spoke to thee! This same shall reign over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel where he stood in the midst of the city, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is?

Samuel answered, I am the seer: go up before me into the high place; for ye shall eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and tell thee all that is in thine heart. As for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind upon them; for they are found. And, indeed, whose are all the delectable things of Israel? Are they not for thee and for thy father's house?

Saul Eats with Samuel.

Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the hall of the high place, and made them sit in the most honorable place among those that were bidden, and there were bidden about thirty persons. And the cook took the right shoulder of the beast, with its appurtenances, being Samuel's own portion, and set it before Saul.

And Samuel said, Behold that which is reserved for thee! Set it before thee, and eat. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. And Samuel communed with Saul on the top of the house. And the next day at dawn he called him, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. Then Saul arose; and they went both of them out of the house together. And when they had now passed without the gate of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, but stand thou still awhile, that I may show thee the commandment of God. And the servant passed on before.

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon Saul's head, and kissed him; and when Saul wondered, he said, Is it not because the Lord hath appointed thee captain over his inheritance?

Three Men with Three Kids.

Furthermore, that he might give him a sign, he said, When thou art departed from me to-day, thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found; and lo, thy father hath forgotten his care for the asses, and sorroweth for thee and thy servant, saying, What shall I do for my son? Then thou shalt go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the Oak of Tabor. Three men shall meet thee, going to worship God in the high place of Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another three loaves of bread, and another a bottle of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread, which thou shalt receive at their hands.

After that, when thou shalt come to Gibeah, the hill of God, hard by the monument of the Philistines, thou shalt meet there a company of the prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp. And the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and thou shalt be turned into another man. These shall be signs unto thee, and when they shall come to pass, then do thou what is

fitting for thee; for God is with thee. And it was so that when he had turned to part from Samuel, God gave him another heart, and all these signs came to pass that day. When he came to the hill of Gibeah, and the company of the prophets met him, then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesised among them.

And when all that knew him beforetime saw this, they said one to another, What is this that is come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?

Then one of the same place answered and said, Do ye wonder? Who is the Father of the prophets? Can he not give the gift to whom he will? Thenceforward it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?

Casting Lots.

And when Saul had made an end of prophesying, he went to the high place to worship there. Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? Saul answered, To seek the asses we went: and when we could not find them, we came to Samuel.

And Saul's uncle said again, Tell me, I pray you, what Samuel said unto you? Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

Then Samuel called all Israel to assemble before the Lord at Mizpeh, and he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms which oppressed you. And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now, therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.

Then Samuel cast the lots; and the lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin. And when the families of the tribe of Benjamin came near, the lot fell on the family of Bichri; and when the household of the Bichrites were taken, it fell on the household of Kish; and when the men of the household of Kish were taken, it fell upon Saul.

Then they asked, Is the man come hither? And it was found that he had hidden himself among the baggage. So they ran and fetched him thence. And when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people, by his head and shoulders.

Then Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?

Saul is King.

And all the people shouted, and said, God save the King.

Then Samuel told the people all the manner of the kingdom, what authority the king should exercise over them, and what obedience they should render to him. All this he wrote in a book, and laid up the writing before the Lord. And afterwards he sent the people away to their own homes.

Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a company of valiant men, whose hearts God had touched. But certain worthless fellows said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents; but he held his peace.

And in the days of Saul the Reubenites made war against the Hagarites, who fell by their hand; and the Reubenites dwelt in their tents throughout all the east land of Gilead. And they were helped against the Hagarites, who were delivered into their

hand and all that were with them: for they cried to God in the battle and he heard them, because they put their trust in him.

Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came up and encamped against Jabesh in Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. But Nahash the Ammonite said, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, that I may make it a reproach upon all Israel.

And the elders of Jabesh said to Nahash, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers into all the borders of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out unto thee. So the messengers went to other cities of Israel and to Gibeah, and they told the tidings in the ears of all the people: and all the people lifted up their voices and wept.

And, behold, Saul came out of the field with the oxen with which he had been ploughing, and he said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HAGARITES.

Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard these tidings, and his anger was greatly kindled. And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout the land of Israel saying, Whosoever cometh not forth

after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen.

And the fear of the Lord came upon all the people, and they came out with one consent. And when Saul numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand. and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

Help is Promised.

Saul said unto the messengers, Thus shall ye say to the men of Jabesh in Gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and showed this to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad; and they sent to the Ammonites, saying, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

On the morrow Saul divided the people into three companies; and they came into the midst of the host of the Ammonites in the morning watch. The men of Jabesh also sallied forth, and there was a great slaughter of the Ammonites, so that not two or three were left together. And Nahash the king also was slain.

Then all the people said to Samuel, Who are they that said, Shall Saul reign over us? Bring the men, that they may be put to death. But Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

Then said Samuel to the people, Come, let us go to Gilgal, aud make Saul king anew. So all the people went to Gilgal; and they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and Samuel anointed him before all Israel; and there they offered peace-offerings; and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Samuel said to Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over this people, over Israel; now, therefore, hearken unto the voice of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy him and all that he hath.

So Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them, two hundred thousand men of Israel, and ten thousand men of Judah. And he came to the city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And he said to the Kenites, Get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from the Amalekites.

Then Saul smote the Amalekites as far as the border of Egypt. Agag their king he took alive; but all the people he slew. Nevertheless he and his people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

The Disobedience of Saul.

Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.

And Samuel was displeased, for he loved Saul greatly; and he cried unto the Lord all night to change his purpose.

Then Samuel said to Saul, Though thou wast little in thine own eyes, wast not thou made the head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint thee to be king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy those sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them till they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst

that which was evil in the sight of the Lord?

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord.

this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thee; neither will the Glory of Israel repent: for he is not a man that he should repent.

Then Saul said, I have sinned; yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.

SAUL TEARING THE ROBE OF SAMUEL.

And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return again with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, Saul laid hold of the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

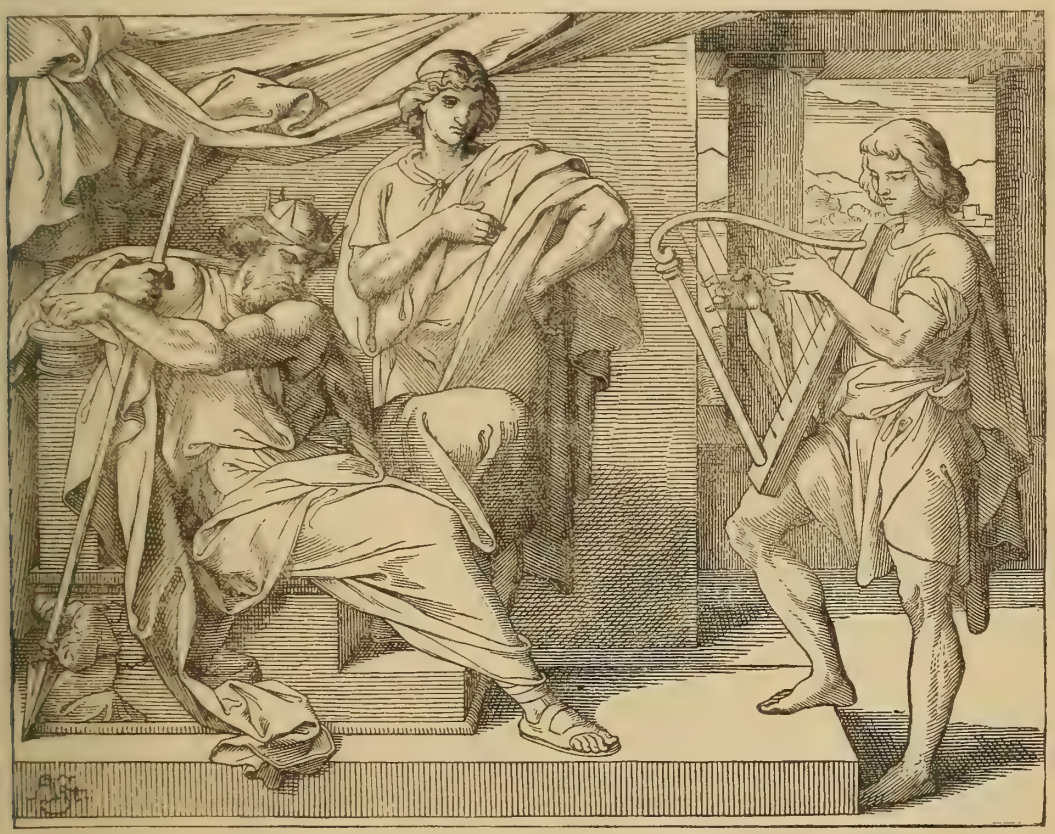
And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee

So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord. Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him trembling. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past; for he had hoped that he should be spared.

And Samuel said to him, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy

mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed him in pieces with his own hands before the altar of the Lord in Gilgal.

Then Samuel went to his own city, to Ramah; and Saul returned to his house in Gibeah of Saul. But Samuel came no more to see Saul till the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul; and it repented the Lord that he had made Saul king over Israel.



DAVID PLAYING THE HARP BEFORE SAUL.

After these things, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord so command, and thy servants which are before thee will seek out a man who is a skillful player upon a harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit of God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

Then Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of his servants, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a valiant man, and prudent in speech, and also a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

Now this son of Jesse was named David. And the servants of Saul had heard how he had slain a lion and a bear while he kept his father's flocks; but they knew not that Samuel had anointed him to be king over

Israel in the room of their master, for this thing had been done in secret.

So Saul sent messenger's to Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. Then Jesse took an ass, and laded it with bread, and put on it also a skin of wine, and a kid, and sent them to Saul by David his son.

And when the evil spirit came upon Saul, David took a harp, and played with his hand. Then Saul was refreshed and well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

SAUL AND HIS MEN SEARCHING FOR DAVID.

Saul became very jealous of David because he was to be king instead of himself, and because he was popular with the people, especially on account of his victory over Goliath, which we shall read about hereafter.

Saul Persecutes David.

David delivered Keilah, that is in the plain of the sea, from the hand of the Philistines. And when Saul heard that he was there, he said, God hath delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in, having entered into a town that hath gates and bars.

So he called together all the people to war, to besiege David and his men in Keilah. But David was aware of his coming, and departed from Keilah. Therefore Saul forbore to go down.

After this David abode in the wilderness of Ziph, which is near unto Hebron. And the men of Ziph sent to Saul, saying, David doth hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of the wilderness. Come down, therefore, O king, if thou wilt, for it is in our power to deliver him into thy hand.

And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me. Go therefore now and see where his haunt is, for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly. Take knowledge, therefore, of all the lurking-places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty of the matter; and if he be in the land, I will search him throughout all the thousands of Judah.

Then the men went to Ziph before Saul; and Saul and his men came searching for David, and came near to take him; for Saul was on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side.

But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Then Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was afterwards called "The Rock of Escaping."

About this time Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him at Ramah, where he dwelt.

After this Saul pursued after David yet again in the wilderness of Ziph. This time David found Saul sleeping, with his men round him; and he took away the spear that was at his bolster, and the cruse of water. Thus did he spare his life a second time, for he would not slay the Lord's anointed.

Saul and the Witch.

When Samuel had been dead three years, the Philistines came up against the land of Israel, and pitched in Shunem, which is in the land of Issachar; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and pitched his camp in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, either by dreams, or by the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, or by the word of a prophet. Now before this, Saul had put away out of the land all that had familiar spirits, and all the wizards. Nevertheless, in his perplexity, he said unto his servants, Seek me now a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.

And Saul's servants said to him, There is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. Then Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two other men with him, and they came to the woman by night.

And he said to her, Help me, I pray thee,

by thy familiar spirit, and bring him up whom I shall name unto thee. The woman said unto him, Thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

Then Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen unto thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

Then the woman used her incantations. But when she saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and she spoke to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. The king said unto her, Be not afraid: what sawest thou?

The woman answered, I saw the shape as of a god ascending out of the earth. Saul said, What form is he of?

The woman made answer, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

Then Samuel said, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul said, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by the word of prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make

known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing that the Lord hath departed from thee, and hath become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to thee as he spoke by me: for he hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and hath given it to thy neighbor, even to David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amálek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me among the dead: the very camp of the children of Israel will the Lord deliver into the hand of the Philistines.

And when Saul heard these words, straightway he fell all his length upon the earth: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

SAUL KILLS HIMSELF BY FALLING ON HIS SWORD.

Then the woman came unto Saul, and when she saw that he was sore troubled, she said unto him, Behold thy handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in

my hand, and have hearkened unto the words which thou spakest unto me; now therefore, I pray thee, hearken unto me, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way. But he refused, saying, I will not eat.

Nevertheless his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice; and he arose from the ground, and sat upon the bench. And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it; she took flour also, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof. These things she did set before Saul and his servants; and they did eat. Afterwards they rose up, and went away that night.

Saul's Last Battle.

The Israelites came down from Mount Gilboa, and pitched by the fountain that is in the valley of Jezreel. Then the Philistines fought with them; and Israel fled before the Philistines to Mount Gilboa, and many fell down slain upon the mount.

The Philistines followed hard upon Saul and his sons. His sons they slew, even Jonathan and Abinadab and Melchishua. And the battle went sore against Saul, for the archers shot at him and wounded him, none daring to come near to smite him with the sword or the spear; and Saul was sore afraid of the archers.

Then said Saul to his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mock my body when I am dead. But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared to slay the king.

Therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that he was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all the men that were with him, that same day together.

And there was a certain young man, an Amalekite, that saw when Saul slew himself. He took the crown from off the king's head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, and took them to David where he abode with his men at Ziklag, and made pretence to David that he himself had slain the king. David made great lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son; but the young man he commanded to be slain, because he had condemned himself of having slain the Lord's anointed.

And when they that dwelt in the plain of Jezreel and in the country eastward to Jordan saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

What they Did with Him.

On the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons lying dead on Mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish the matter in the temples of the idols and among the people.

Saul's armor they hung up in the house of Astarte that was in Askelon, and his head they fastened in the temple of Dagon that was in Ashdod, and his body they fastened to the wall of Beth-shan.

But when the men of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the men of war arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and brought them to Jabesh-gilead, and burnt them there.

CHAPTER XVI.

B. C. 1063.

THE STORY OF DAVID—ANOINTED BY THE PROPHET—THE SLING THAT SLEW A GIANT—THE ENEMY ROUTED—SAUL'S ANGER AGAINST DAVID—JONATHAN'S FRIENDSHIP—THE WANDERER—SAUL SPARED BY DAVID—ABIGAIL SENDS A PRESENT AND BECOMES DAVID'S WIFE—WHAT HAPPENED AT ZIKLAG—STARTLING NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

WE HAVE been reading of David, and now we come to the story of this remarkable man. In the days of King Saul there dwelt at Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, a certain man whose name was Jesse. He was the son of Obed, and Obed was the son of Ruth the Moabitess and Boaz. This Jesse had eight sons and two daughters, and the youngest of his sons was David.

The Lord, being displeased with Saul, said to Samuel, Fill thine horn with oil, and go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem: for I have provided me a king among his sons. So Samuel went. And the elders of Bethlehem, knowing that he and the king were not friends, said to him, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice to the Lord; purify yourselves, and come to the sacrifice. He bade also Jesse and his sons purify themselves, and he invited them to the sacrifice.

And when they came, and he saw Eliab the eldest, and perceived how goodly and tall he was, he said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said, Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Then Jesse made Abinadab, his second son, and then Shammah, his third son, pass before Samuel, and after these yet four others. But Samuel said, The Lord hath not chosen these.

He said again, Are all thy children here? Jesse answered, There remaineth yet the youngest, and he keepeth the sheep. Then Samuel said, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come.

A Handsome Youth.

So Jesse sent for him. Now he was a youth, short of stature, his hair of a ruddy color, his eyes bright, and he was fair to look upon. And when he came, the Lord said to Samuel, This is he; arise, and anoint him. So Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and from that day the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

After these things Saul was troubled with a spirit of madness, and his servants said to him, Let us seek out a man that is a skillful player upon the harp. When the evil spirit shall come upon thee, he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. Then Saul said to his servants, Find me now such a man, and bring him to me. One of them answered, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skillful in playing, a valiant youth, and prudent of speech, and a

comely person. So Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. So Jesse sent a present of bread and wine and a kid by David to Saul. And David abode with Saul, and when the spirit of madness came upon the king David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed and well.

valley of the Terebinth. There came a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was over eight feet. And he was clad in a heavy coat of mail, with a helmet of brass upon his legs; and between his shoulders he carried a javelin of brass. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the spear head weighed

SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID AT BETHLEHEM.

After a while, because the king seemed to be healed of his madness, David departed from him and returned to Bethlehem, and fed his father's flocks, as he had done before. And while he was thus employed, the Philistines came up against Israel, and pitched their camp in Ephes-dammin, and Saul and the men of Israel pitched on the hills over against them, and between them was the

about seventeen pounds. And one bearing a shield went before.

And the man cried to the men of Israel, Choose you a man for you, and send him to fight with me. If he be able to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail over him, and kill him, then shall ye serve us. But Saul and all Israel were dismayed at his words, for there was none that could match

him in stature or in the strength of his armor. Forty days, day by day, did Goliath of Gath challenge the men of Israel.

One day Jesse said to David his son, Go now to the camp and carry an ephah of parched corn, and these ten loaves to thy brothers in the camp, and see how they fare, and bring back an answer from them. Carry also these cheeses to the captain of their thousand. For the three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle.

He Goes to the Battle.

So David rose early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and came to the wagons with which the men of Israel had fortified their camp, as the host was going forth to the fight and shouted for the battle. Thereupon he left the things that he had brought with the keeper of baggage, and ran into the army, and saluted his brethren.

And as he talked with them the champion of the Philistines came forth from their camp, and cried as he was wont; and David heard his words. But all the men of Israel fled at the sight of him, for they were sore afraid. They said to David, Hast thou seen this man that is come up to defy Israel? The man that killeth him the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter to wife, and will make his father's house free of all tax and tribute.

Then David said, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? And the people answered him in the same words. When Eliab his eldest brother heard how he spoke with the men, his anger was kindled against him, and he said, Why camest thou hither? With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart. Thou art come down to see the battle. But David answered, What harm have I done? Did not my father send me?

A Brave Answer.

The words that David had said were told to Saul, and Saul sent for him. Then David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail him because of this Philistine; behold, thy servant will go and fight with him. Saul made answer, Thou art not able to fight with this Philistine; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. But David said, I kept my father's sheep, and behold a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock; and as he was carrying it away, I overtook him, and slew him; and as I returned to the flock a lion met me; him also I took by the beard and slew. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this Philistine shall fare as these, seeing that he hath defied the armies of the living God; for truly he that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will also deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.

So Saul said, Go, and the Lord be with thee. And Saul clad him in armor, and put a helmet upon his head, and gave him a sword to gird upon his side. But David had never made trial of such things, and when he endeavored to go in them, he could not. Therefore he put them off, and took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones out of the brook that ran in the valley, putting them in his shepherd's wallet, and so went, having his sling in his hand, and drew near to the Philistine.

The Philistine also came on, and drew near to David; and when he looked about, and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And he said to David, Am I

a dog that thou comest to me with staves? And he cursed him by his gods, and said to him, Come near, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the

And when the Philistine drew near, David ran to meet him; and as he ran he put his hand into his wallet, and took thence a stone, and threw it, and smote the Philistine on the forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with

DAVID SLAYING GOLIATH.

name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

a sling and a stone. But, because he had no sword, he ran and stood upon the Philistine, and drawing the man's sword out of its sheath, smote off his head therewith.

And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel pursued them even to Gath and Ekron; and when they returned from the

pursuit they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine and his armor. But Saul said to Abner, captain of the host, Abner whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy son liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

Then the king said, Inquire whose son the stripling is. And Abner brought David to Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, young man? David said, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

That day Saul took him, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Also Jonathan, that was Saul's son, and heir of his kingdom, loved him as his own soul; and he gave him his own robe, and his sword, and his bow, and his girdle. After this Saul made him his armor-bearer, and set him over his men of war; and on whatever errand David was sent he behaved himself wisely, and approved himself in the sight of the king's servants and of all the people.

Saul Is Angry.

But it came to pass one day that as he was returning, having made a great slaughter of the Philistines, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, and playing on instruments of music to meet him and the king. And one company sang, Saul hath slain his thousands, and the other company answered, And David his ten thousands. Thereat Saul was very angry, for the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed to David his ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands only; now there is only the kingdom left for him. And from that day forward he looked jealously upon David.

After a while madness came again upon Saul, and David played upon the harp to soothe him, as he had been wont to do at the first. But Saul sat with a javelin in his hand. Once he made as if he would have cast it at David; but David escaped out of his presence. Again, another time, he struck at David with it: but David slipped away, and he smote the javelin into the wall.

After this the king sent David away, making him captain of a thousand, in which command he behaved himself so wisely that all the people loved him.

A Snare for David.

Now hitherto Saul had not fulfilled his promise that he would give his daughter to wife to the man who should slay the champion of the Philistines. Therefore he said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab; her will I give thee to wife. Only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles. (But he hoped that David would be slain by the Philistines, being unwilling to lay hands upon him himself.) And David said to Saul, Who am I, and what is my father's house, that I should be son-in-law to the king? But at the time when Merab should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel of Meholah.

Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And when Saul knew of it, the thing pleased him, for he said to himself, Now will I make my daughter a snare to David, and he shall be slain by the Philistines.

Then he commanded his servants that they say to David, Behold the king hath delight in thee, and all men love thee. Why shouldst thou not marry the king's daughter? But David said, It is no easy thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man. Then Saul's servants answered him, The king requireth no dowry from thee, such as he required of Adriel for his daughter Merab. Only bring him the spoils of a hundred Philistines.

But the purpose of the king was that

SAUL CASTING THE JAVELIN AT DAVID.

David should fall by the hand of the Philistines. The thing pleased David, and before the time had expired wherein it had been covenanted that the king's daughter should be given him, he went forth, he and his men, and slew two hundred of the Philistines, and brought their spoils to the king. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal to wife. Nevertheless from that time forward Saul hated David, and sought to slay him.

For a time, indeed, Jonathan his son, who loved David exceedingly, turned the king from his purpose, for he said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he hath not sinned against thee, but hath served thee well. Did he not take his life in his hand, and slay the Philistine, the Lord working great salvation for Israel by him? Thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou shed innocent blood, slaying David without a cause?

Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan his son, and sware, As the Lord liveth, David shall not be slain.

Escapes from a Window.

Thence Jonathan brought David again into the presence of his father and he abode with him; and when the Philistines came up again into the land of Israel, David went out against them, and slew them with a great slaughter.

But when Saul in his madness sought to slay him with the javelin that he carried in his hand, David escaped by night to his own house. There the messengers of Saul watched him; and Michal his wife said to him, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain.

So that night Michal let David down from a window, and he fled. But she took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a blanket of goat's hair over it, covering it up; and the spies of Saul thought that it was David's self. In the morning the king sent messengers to take David, and Michal said to them, He is sick.

Then he sent them again, saying, Bring us up to him that we may see him. So Michal brought them up into the chamber; and behold there was an image in the bed covered with a blanket of goat's hair.

Then Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me thus, and caused my enemy to escape?

Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

Thus David fled from Saul, and became an outcast in the land of Israel.

When David was escaped from his house he fled to Samuel, to Ramah, where was the school of the prophets. Thither Saul sent messengers to take him; but when the men saw the company of the prophets prophesying, the Spirit of God came upon them, and they prophesied. Then the king sent other messengers, and they prophesied also; and he sent a third time, and these also prophesied.

Last of all he came himself; and the Spirit came upon him, and having stripped off his outer garments, he prophesied before Samuel, and lay down all that day and all that night.

He Finds a Friend.

In the meanwhile, David fled from Ramah to the king's court, to Jonathan. And he said to Jonathan, What have I done? What is my offence? What is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

Jonathan answered him, God forbid that this should be. My father will not do anything either great or small, but he will show it to me. It is not as thou fearest.

But David said again, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know

this, lest he be grieved. Verily there is but a step between my soul and death, for he hideth his purpose from thee.

Then Jonathan said, Whatsoever thou wilt, I will do for thee.

David said to Jonathan, To-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat—for the king had invited him, making as though he were reconciled—but let me go that I may hide myself for three days, till the feast be finished. If thy father at all miss me, then thou shalt say, David earnestly desired leave of me that he might hasten to Bethlehem, where there is a yearly sacrifice of his family. If thy father shall say, It is well, then shall I have peace; but if he be very wroth, then be sure that he hath determined evil against me. Deal therefore kindly with me; and if there be evil in me, slay me thyself.

Jonathan answered, If I knew that my father had determined evil against thee, would I not tell thee? Then David said, How wilt thou tell me?

The Three Arrows.

Then they went out together into the open country. And Jonathan said to David, Surely I will tell thee, if my father determine evil against thee. And do thou show me kindness while I live; and when I am dead, cease not from showing kindness to my children after me, in the days when the Lord shall cut off all thine enemies from the face of the earth.

So David and Jonathan made a covenant together. Then Jonathan said to David, Hide thyself by the stone Ezel. And on the third day I will come and shoot three arrows by the stone, as though I shot at a mark; and I will send a lad to find the arrows. If I say to him, The arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come, for there is peace; no harm is determined against thee. But if I say, The arrows are beyond thee; then go, for the Lord doth send thee way.

So David hid himself by the stone Ezel. On the new moon the king sat down to the feast, and Jonathan sat by the king's right hand, and Abner on the other side; but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul said nothing that day. But on the morrow of the new moon, when David's place was again empty, Saul said to Jonathan, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to the feast, either yesterday or to-day?

Jonathan answered, David earnestly desired leave of me that he might go to the yearly sacrifice of his family at Bethlehem, that he might see his brethren. Therefore he cometh not to the king's table.

Jonathan is Grieved.

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said, Thou son of the rebellious and perverse woman, thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion. Surely as long as he liveth, thou shalt not be established in the kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him, that he may die.

But Jonathan said, Wherefore should he be slain? What evil hath he done?

Then Saul would have smitten him with a javelin. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat nothing on the second day of the feast, being grieved for the wrong that his father did to David.

On the morrow Jonathan went at the time appointed to the place where David had hidden himself, and shot the arrows as he had said. And he said to the lad, Run, find out now the arrows that I shoot. And as he ran, he shot an arrow beyond him; and when the lad came to the place, he cried, Is

not the arrow beyond thee? Make haste, speed, tarry not. So the lad gathered up the arrows and returned to his master; but he knew nothing of the matter. Only David and Jonathan knew.

Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrows

THE COVENANT BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN.

to the lad, and said, Go, carry them to the city. When the lad was gone, David rose up from his hiding-place, and bowed himself before Jonathan three times to the ground. And they kissed one another, and wept one with another. Then Jonathan said to David, Go in peace. The Lord be the witness of the covenant that is between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever. So David departed, and Jonathan went back to the city to his father.

David came to Nob, where at this time was the tabernacle and the dwelling of Ahimelech the high-priest. Ahimelech was troubled at his coming, and said, Why art thou alone? For he had no companions, but only the young men his servants. David answered, The king sent me on an errand, and commanded that none should know it. What provision hast thou? Give me five

loaves of bread, or whatever thou hast. The priest said, There is no bread here but the hallowed bread. For it was the custom that, day by day, certain loaves, that were called the shewbread, were put hot in the tabernacle, and those which had been put there the day before were taken away and given to the priests. The loaves, therefore, that had just been taken from the tabernacle did Ahimelech give to David and his young men.

Then David said to the priest, Hast thou here spear or sword? For I have neither brought sword or any weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

The priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, wrapped in his cloak, is behind the ephod. If thou wilt take that, take it; there is none other here save that.

People Flock to Him.

And David said, There is none like that; give it me. From Nob he fled into the land of the Philistines to Achish, king of Gath. And when the servants of Achish saw him, they said, Is not this the champion of Israel, of whom the women sang, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

And when David saw that he was known, he was sore afraid of what Achish might do to him. Therefore he feigned himself mad. Then said the king to his servants, Lo! ye see the man is mad. Wherefore have ye brought him to me? Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? And he drove him away.

Then David fled to the cave of Adullam. Thither came to him his father and his mother and his brethren; the sons also of his sister Zeruiah—Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel. Many also that were in debt or had received injury from Saul, resorted to him; and certain Canaanites also, and Ahithophel the Hittite. Over these he became a captain; and there were with him about four hundred men. Also the prophet Gad came to him, and became his seer, delivering to him the oracles of God.

Among them that resorted to him at this time were eleven warriors of the tribe of Gad; men of war, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were swift as roes upon the mountains. These were they who swam over Jordan in the first month when it overflows all its banks, and put to flight the men of the valleys.

He Captures the Robbers.

Some even of the tribe of Benjamin, fellow-tribesmen of King Saul, joined themselves to his company. These were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows from a bow. But when others of this same tribe came with Amasa, that was son to Abigail, David's sister, David was troubled in mind, and going out to meet them, said, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be one with your hearts; but if ye come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing that I have done you no wrong, the God of our fathers requite you for it.

Then Amasa answered, We are thine, David: peace be unto thee and thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains in his band.

About this time David went to Mizpeh of Moab, and said to the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, abide with thee, till I know what God shall do for me. And they dwelt with the king of Moab as long as David was in the hold.

After a while the prophet Gad said to David, Abide not in the hold. So he departed, and dwelt in the forest of Hareth. While he was there, there came some that told him, Behold the Philistines fight against Keilah, and rob the threshing-floors. And David inquired of the Lord, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said, Go up and smite them and save Keilah. But David's men were afraid. Therefore he inquired again, and the Lord answered him as before. So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. And he abode in Keilah.

While he was there, there came to him Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech the priest, with the ephod in his hand. He only had escaped when Saul smote Nob, the city of the priests; for when Saul had heard how Ahimelech had received David, and had given him bread to eat, and also the sword of Goliath, he sent Doeg the Edomite, who also had told him of the matter, to slay him.

A Cruel Slaughter.

So Doeg destroyed all that were in Nob—man, woman, and child. Only Abiathar escaped and fled to David. And David said to Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul; I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh thy life, seeketh my life; but with me thou shalt be safe.

When Saul heard that David was in Keilah, he said, God hath delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in a town that hath gates and bars. But David knew that Saul intended mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee. Then David and his men, six hundred in number, departed from Keilah, and went whithersoever they could; and the band was scattered, but David abode in the wilderness of Ziph that is between Hebron and Engedi. Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

The men of Ziph sent to Saul, saying, David hides himself in our country. Come, therefore; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand. So Saul went down after him, and came near to taking him; for Saul was on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. But there came a messenger to Saul, saying, The Philistines have invaded the land. So he left off pursuing David, and went to fight against the Philistines.

After this David dwelt in the strongholds of Engedi. When Saul heard of it, he pursued him with three thousand men. Now there was a cave wherein the shepherds kept their sheep, and Saul turned into it. But David and his men were in the back part of the cave. David's men said to him, Behold, the Lord hath given thine enemy into thy hand!

Saul in the Cave.

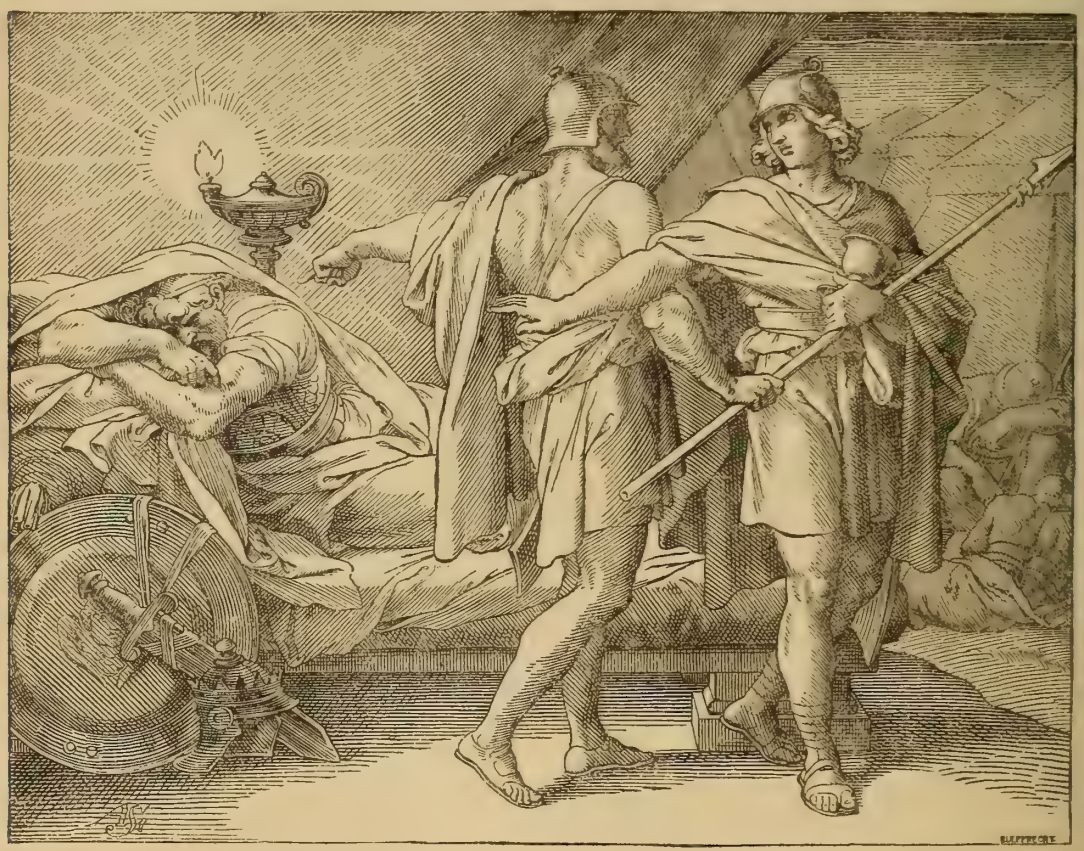
Then David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe; but Saul knew it not. Yet David's heart smote him for having done even so much; for, said he, He is the Lord's anointed. Nor would he suffer his men to do aught against the king. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

And when he was gone, David arose also, and cried after him, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth.

Then Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And he wept aloud. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. To-day the Lord delivered me into thine hand, and thou killedst me not. If a man find his enemy, will he let him go? And now, behold, I know that thou shalt be king. Swear therefore to me that thou wilt not cut off my posterity after me, nor destroy my name out of my father's house. David swore this unto Saul; and Saul returned to his place.

Nevertheless he came once more pursuing David in this same wilderness of Ziph. And David hid himself in the wood. Then Jonathan, Saul's son, came to him, and encouraged him, saying, Fear not; for Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and this my father knoweth.

Then the two renewed their covenant that they had made between them; and David abode still in the wood, but Jonathan returned to his house. And these two saw each other no more after that day. And when Saul had pitched his camp, he lay down to sleep behind the rampart of wagons, and the people lay round about him, with Abner the captain of the host.



DAVID SPARES THE SLEEPING SAUL.

Then said David to Ahimelech and Abishai, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

So they went down; and behold, Saul lay sleeping behind the wagons, and his spear was stuck in the ground by his bolster. Then Abishai said to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand. Let me now smite him with the spear into the earth; I will not smite him a second time.

But David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? The Lord shall smite him; or his day will come to die; or he shall descend into the battle and perish; but God forbid that I should stretch my hand against him.

Then he took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster. After this the two got them away; and no man saw it or knew it, for a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them all.

Then David went on the other side of the valley, and cried to Abner, the captain of the host, Answerest thou not, Abner?

Abner said, Who art thou that criest to the king?

And David said to Abner, Art thou not a valiant man? Who is like thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? For there came one of the people to destroy the king; and ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. For see now where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

Their Last Meeting.

Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? He answered, It is my voice, my lord, O king, Wherefore dost thou pursue after thy servant? For what have I done?

Saul said to David, I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will do thee no more harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly.

David said, Behold the king's spear; let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The Lord render to every man according to his righteousness. Behold, as thy life was precious in mine eyes this day, so may my life be precious in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David! Thou shalt do great things, and shalt prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place. Neither did these two meet any more.

A Message to Nabal.

Now there dwelt in the south of Carmel a certain rich man whose name was Nabal, of the house of Caleb. He had very great flocks—three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. A churlish man he was, and evil in his doings; but his wife, Abigail by name, was a wise woman, and of a beautiful countenance.

While Nabal was shearing his sheep, David sent to him ten young men with this message, Peace be to thee, and to thy house, and to all that is thine. We have not hurt thy shepherds when they were near to us; neither was there aught missing all the time that they were in Carmel. Ask thy servants whether it be not so. And now, seeing that this is a time of rejoicing with thee, give whatsoever cometh to thy hand to thy servants, and to thy son David.

The young men came to Nabal and spoke thus. But Nabal answered, Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? These are slaves that have run away from their master; for there be many such nowadays. Shall I take my bread, and my water, and the sheep that I have killed for my shearers, and give them unto men of whom I know not whence they be?

So the messengers came back and told these words to David; and David said to his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they did so. And David said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him; for now he hath returned evil for good. God do so and more also, to all the enemies of David, if I leave him aught remaining by to-morrow's light! And he went up with four hundred men after him; but two hundred abode with the baggage.

Message to Nabal's Wife.

Meanwhile the servants of Nabal went to his wife Abigail and told her, saying, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master, and he railed on them. Now the men were very good to us, neither missed we anything, as long as we were in their company. They were as a wall to us by day and by night, so long as we stayed in the wilderness. Consider, therefore, what thou wilt do; for there is evil determined against this household.

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two skins of wine, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and a hundred cakes of figs. These she laid upon asses, and on another ass she rode herself, and said to her men, Go on before with the present, but tell not the thing to Nabal. And as she went, she met David and his men.

And when she saw him, she hasted, and lighted down from her ass, and fell upon her face, and said, Let this offence be upon me, my lord. Hearken now to the words of thy handmaid. Regard not this man Nabal; for as is his name (which means fool), so is he. But I thine handmaid did not see the young men who came to him. But let this present which thine handmaid hath brought be for the young men that follow thee; and forgive our trespass, for Jehovah will make of my lord a sure house, because my lord fighteth his battles.

"Go to Thy House in Peace."

Then David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thou, who hast kept me from shedding blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand. For in very deed, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, I had not left aught alive to Nabal by the morning light.

So David received of her hand the present which she had brought, and said to her, Go to thy house in peace; behold I have accepted thy request.

So Abigail returned to Nabal her husband; and he held a great feast, as the feast of a king; and his heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Therefore she told him nothing, good or bad, till the morning light. But the next day, when the wine was gone out of him, she told him all, both the danger in which he had been, and the present that she had given to David. And when he heard it, his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And on the tenth day he died.

After these things Abigail became David's wife. Now Michal, daughter of Saul, that had been married to him before, had been taken from him, and had been given to another.

As Saul pursued hard after David, David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall not seek me any more in the borders of Israel. So he took the six hundred men that were with him, and fled to Achish, the king of Gath.

And Achish gave him the town of Ziklag in which to dwell.

David deceived Achish, making pretence that he invaded the land of Israel, while in truth he had invaded the land of the Amalekites, and of the other tribes that dwelt thereabouts. Achish therefore said, He hath made his own people utterly to abhor him; therefore will he be my servant for ever.

After these things there arose war between Israel and the Philistines. And Achish said to David, Thou shalt go with me to battle, thou and thy men. And David answered craftily, Consider in what place thou wilt put me; for neither would he fight against his own people, nor would he give offence to the king. And the king said, Thou shalt be captain of my bodyguards.

Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek, and the men of Israel pitched their camp by a fountain that was in Jezreel. And David and his men were in the rearward of the army with Achish the king.

ABIGAIL'S PRESENT TO DAVID.

Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? Achish answered, Is not this David, whom Saul his master would have slain? He hath been with me many days, yea years, and I have found no fault in him since he came to me to this day.

But the princes said, Make this fellow go

back to the place which thou hast given him to dwell in, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest he turn against us in the battle. How could he better reconcile himself to his master than with our lives? For is not this David of whom they sang one to another in dances—

"Saul slew his thousands,
And David his ten thousands?"

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, As the Lord liveth, I have found thee upright; no evil have I seen in thee since the day of thy coming unto this day. Nevertheless the princes love thee not. Wherefore now go back to thy place in peace, that thou displease not the princes.

David and His Men Return.

David answered, What evil hast thou found in me that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king.

Achish said, Thou art good in my sight even as angel of God. Nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go with us to the battle. Therefore rise up early in the morning with thy men, and so soon as ye have light, depart.

So David and his men returned to the land of the Philistines, and on the third day they came to Ziklag where they dwelt. And the Amalekites had come up out of the south country, and had smitten Ziklag, and had burned it with fire. The women they had carried away captives; they had slain none, but had taken all and gone their way.

And when David and his men came to the city, lo, it was wasted with fire; and their wives and children had been carried away captives. Then they wept till they had no more power to weep. And the people were very angry with David because he had provoked the Amalekites, and because he had left the town without defence. And they would have stoned him; therefore was he sorely distressed. So David inquired of the Lord, Shall I pursue after these robbers? Shall I overtake them? And he answered, Pursue after them, for without doubt thou shalt overtake them, and recover all.

Startling News.

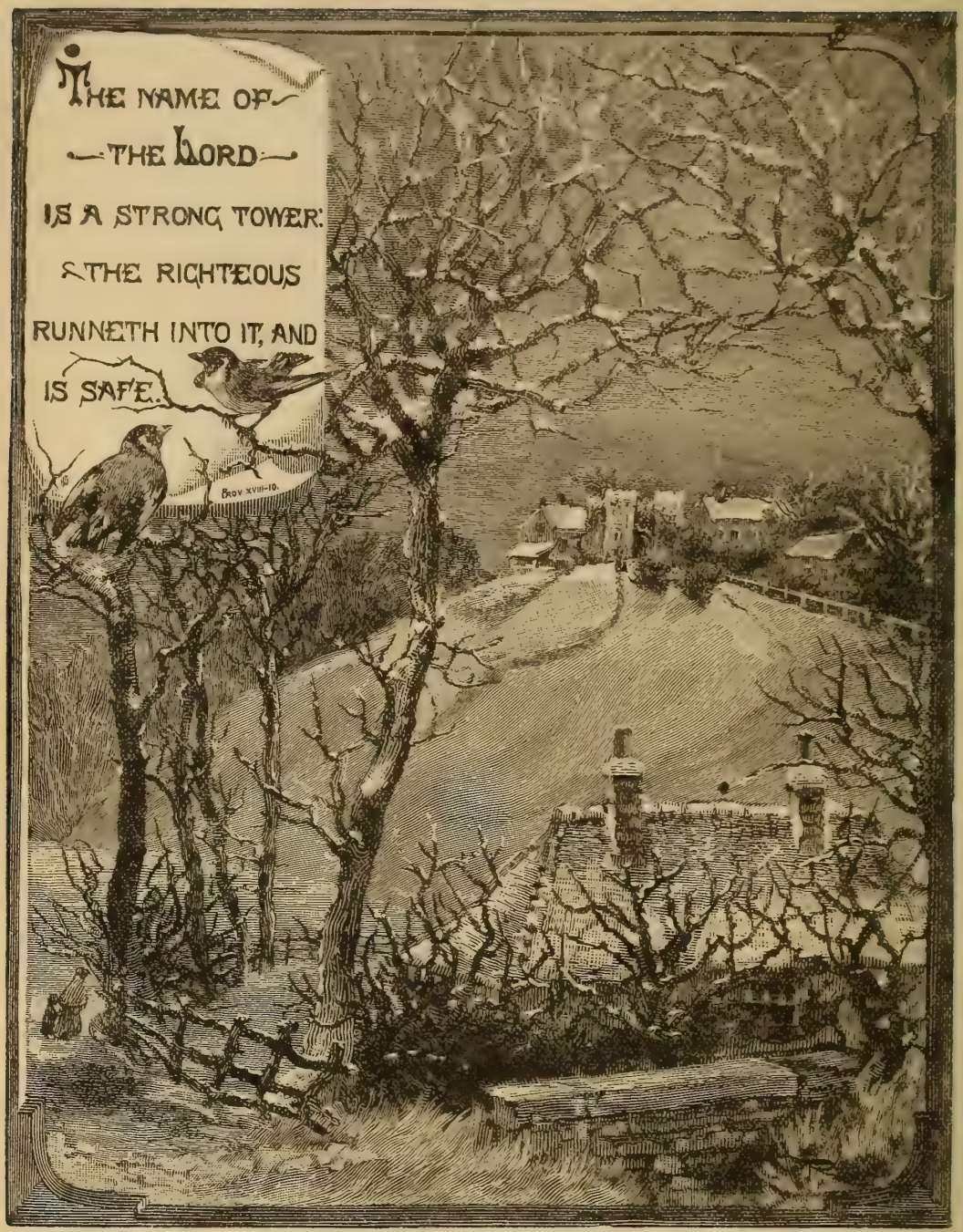
So David pursued after them, he and his six hundred men with him. But when they came to the brook Besor, two hundred men were so faint that they could go no farther, and they abode by the brook. But David, with the four hundred, pursued after the Amalekites.

Two days did David abide in Ziklag after he had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites. And on the third day there came a man out of the camp of Saul; for Saul had encamped on Mount Gilboa, and had done battle there with the Philistines And the man had his clothes rent, and earth upon his head.

And when he came to David, he fell to the earth and did obeisance. And David asked him, Whence comest thou? The man said, Out of the camp of Israel have I escaped. And David said, How went the matter? I pray thee tell me. He answered, The people fled before the Philistines, and many are dead; Saul also is dead, and Jonathan his son.

Then David rent his clothes; and so also did all the men that were with him. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until evening, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for all the people of the Lord, because they were fallen by the sword, and had perished out of the land.

PEACE AND JOY.



THE NAME OF THE LORD.

CHAPTER XVII.

B. C. 1056.

THE REIGN OF DAVID—WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES—THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM—DAVID AND URIAH—NATHAN'S REBUKE—PARABLE OF THE EWE LAMB—THE DEAD CHILD—REBELLION OF ABSALOM—DAVID'S FLIGHT—A GREAT BATTLE—DEATH OF ABSALOM—DAVID'S GRIEF—A KISS AND A STAB—TERRIBLE PESTILENCE—DAVID YIELDS HIS THRONE TO SOLOMON.

SAUL and his sons had fallen on Mount Gilboa, and the army of Israel was destroyed; then those who dwelt in the plains of Jezreel and by the borders of Jordan fled from their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. Then the men, seeing that they wanted a leader, arose and anointed David to be their king; and when David inquired of the Lord in which of the cities of Judah he should set up his kingdom, the Lord said that he should set it up in Hebron. But Abner, that was captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and made him king over the rest of Israel; and Ishbosheth reigned in Manhanaim that is on the other side of Jordan eastward.

After a while Abner went out with a company of men from Manhanaim to Gibeon in the land of Benjamin, for he would have the son of Saul dwell in the midst of his father's tribe; and Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went out against him with the servants of David. These two met by the pool in Gibeon, and encamped, the one on the one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. Then Abner said to Joab, Let us choose champions from our companies, and let them fight together before us. So they chose champions from each company —twelve of the tribe of Benjamin, which followed Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And the twelve fought against the twelve. They caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword into his fellow's side; so they all died together. Wherefore that place was called in after time, the Field of the Sharp Swords, because the victory had fallen neither to these champions nor to those. After this, there was a very sore battle; and Abner and the men of Israel fled before the servants of David.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David in Judah, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out Israel and broughtest them back. And the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and be a captain over Israel.

Then David the king made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed him king over Israel. And after he was anointed they abode with David three days eating and drinking, for their brethren that dwelt near to the city had prepared a great store of good things for them; bringing food on asses and camels and mules and oxen, even meal, and cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly; for there was joy in Israel.

Thirty years old was David when he began to reign. For seven years and six months he reigned in Hebron over Judah, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

When David had been anointed king over all Israel, he went up to Jerusalem, he and all the men of war with him, that he might set up his throne therein, for Jerusalem belonged as yet to the children of Jebus. Now the citadel, which was called Mount Zion, was so strong that the Jebusites laughed David to scorn, putting the maimed and the blind to man the walls. And David was angry, and said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites shall be captain of the host. Then Joab, the son of Zeruiah, climbed up first and smote the garrison, and David made him captain of the host.

DAVID ANOINTED KING OVER ISRAEL.

When Hiram, king of Tyre, heard how David had taken the stronghold of the children of Jebus, he sent an embassy to him. Also he sent cedar trees from Lebanon, and carpenters and masons, that they might build a palace for the king.

Now the Philistines had heard that David

had been anointed king over Israel, and they came up against him with their whole host. David therefore went down to the stronghold that was by the cave of Adullam, and there abode with his men of war; and the Philistines spread themselves in the valley of the giants.

And David inquired of the Lord, Shall I go up against the Philistines? And the Lord said, Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thy hand. So David went up, and smote them; and he called the name of the place where he smote them The Land of the Breaking-forth, because the Lord, he said, has broken forth upon mine enemies, even as waters break forth. For so suddenly had they fled that they left behind them the images of their gods, and these David and his men burned with fire.

When David had rest from his wars, he went, and the chosen men of Israel with him, to fetch the ark from Kirjath-jearim, where it had been since the time when it was sent back by the Philistines, and he brought it to Jerusalem with great gladness. He and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of a trumpet.

What Nathan Said.

After this he said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth in a tent. Shall I build a house for it? And Nathan said, Go, do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee.

When David was at rest from his wars, he said, Is there yet any that is left in the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they brought him to David, and when David asked him concerning the house of Saul, he said, Jonathan hath yet a son who is lame in the feet. So David sent and fetched him. And when he came unto David, he fell on his face, and did him reverence.

And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant. Then David said, Fear not; I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father's father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

Then Mephibosheth bowed himself before the king, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am? The king called Ziba and said, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul. Now therefore thou and thy sons and thy servants shall till the lands, and shall pay of their produce to Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded, so will thy servant do.

David's Great Sin.

After this Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, died, and Hanun, his son, reigned in his stead. Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, even as his father showed kindness unto me. So David sent messengers to comfort him.

In the next year, at the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab and the host against the city of Rabbah, but he himself tarried in Jerusalem. And being there he sinned a great sin, for he took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and caused that Uriah, her husband, should be slain. The way of his doing it was this.

He wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah, for Uriah had come to Jerusalem, saying, Set ye Uriah where the

DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM WITH GREAT REJOICING

battle is hottest, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die. Then Joab assigned to Uriah a place where valiant men of the city were. These made a sally from the city, and the men of Israel fled before them, and Uriah was left alone, and was slain.

Then Joab sent a messenger to David to tell him of that which had happened; and he said to the messenger, If the king's wrath arise, so that he say to thee, Why went ye so near to the city? Knew ye not that they would shoot from the walls? Did not a woman cast a piece of millstone from the wall of Thebez upon Abimelech, so that he died? Then shalt thou say, Thy servant Uriah, the Hittite, is dead also. The messenger went and showed David all that Joab had sent him for. And David said unto the messenger, Say unto Joab, Let not this thing trouble thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another; make thy battle strong against the city, and overthrow it.

When Uriah's wife had mourned for her husband seven days, David took her to be his wife, and she bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

The Poor Man's Lamb.

Therefore the Lord sent Nathan the prophet unto David. And he came and said, Give me thy judgment in this matter. There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up in the house with him, and with his children. It did eat of his own bread, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that had come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing is worthy to die. He shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

Then Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord, I anointed thee to be king over Israel, and gave thee all that was Saul's thy master's. And if this had been too little, I would have given thee more. Wherefore, then, hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, and taken the wife of Uriah to be thy wife, and slain him with the sword of the children of Amnon? Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house.

The Child Must Die.

Then David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.

And Nathan said to David, The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed thou hast given to the enemies of the Lord great occasion to blaspheme, the child that has been born unto thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed to his house.

After this the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David was very sick. And David besought God for the child, and fasted, and went to his chamber, and lay all night upon the ground. And when the elders of his house would have raised him up from the earth, he refused; neither would he eat bread. On the seventh day the child died. The servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke unto him, and he would not hearken unto our

voice; what hurt will he do to himself if we tell him that the child is dead?

But when David saw that his servants whispered together, he perceived that the child was dead. Then he said to his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

Thereupon David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread?

And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

After this David's wife Bathsheba bore him another son; and David called his name Solomon; and the Lord loved him, and sent by Nathan the prophet that he should have also the name Jedidiah, which is by interpretation, Beloved of the Lord.

DAVID MOURNING THE DEATH OF HIS CHILD.

Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah, and took it. And he sent to David, saying, I have fought against Rabbah, and have

taken the Lower City. Now gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the Upper City, and take it; lest I take it, and the glory of its taking be mine.

So David went up against Rabbah, and took it. The crown that was upon the head of Milcom their god he took and set on his own head; and the people he put to death with fire and sword.

Every Man a Soldier.

Now the army of David was ordered in this fashion. First, there was the band of the Six Hundred that were called The Mighty Men. These had been with him when he wandered in the wilderness; and when one died, another was chosen in his place. The Six Hundred were in three bands, and each band again was in ten companies; and for each band was there a chief and for each company a leader. The chiefs of the bands were the Three, and the leaders of the companies the Thirty. But the captain of the Six Hundred was Abishai, the brother of Joab.

Second, there was the Body-guard, that was called the Cherethites and Pelethites. Their captain was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada.

Third, there was the Host, to which every man of the children of Israel was called, being grown to manhood, not yet disabled by age. And this Host was divided into twelve parts, for each month one, and the number of a part was four and twenty thousand. The leaders of the parts were from the Body-guard or the Six Hundred; and the captain of the Host was Joab.

When David was growing old, there arose a great quarrel between two of his sons, namely, Amnon, his eldest born, and Absalom, for Absalom hated Amnon, not without cause. After a while Absalom had a shearing of sheep in the land of Ephraim. Amnon was there and was slain by the servants of Absalom.

But Absalom fled to Geshur, to Talmai, his mother's father.

After a while David was comforted for the death of his son Amnon; and he longed to see Absalom again; and would have called him back, but that all his household and his servants were against him in this matter. But when Joab perceived how the king's heart was inclined, he devised means for strengthening him in his purpose.

The king sent for Joab and said, Let the young man come back to his house, but let him not see my face. So Joab went, and fetched Absalom from Geshur, and Absalom returned to his house.

Now in all Israel there was not one to be praised so much for his beauty as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. His hair, which he cut every year, was very thick and heavy.

For two years Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. Therefore he sent for Joab, that Joab might bring him unto the king. Twice he sent for him, but Joab would not come.

Burning the Barley Field.

Then Absalom bade his servant set fire to a field of barley that was Joab's, and near to his own. And they set the field on fire. Then Joab came to Absalom, and said, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? Absalom said, Because thou wouldest not come to me. Wherefore am I come from Geshur? It had been good for me to abide there. Let me now therefore see the king's face, and if I have done wrong, let him kill me.

So Joab brought Absalom before the king,

and Absalom bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed him.

After these things Absalom thought to make himself king in the room of his father David. First he prepared for himself chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him. Also he rose up early, and stood in the way that led to the gate of the city; and when any man brought a cause to the king for judgment, Absalom called him, and said, Of what city art thou? And the man would answer, Thy servant is of such or such a tribe.

Then Absalom said, Thy cause is good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Further he said, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man that had any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! Furthermore, when any man came nigh to him to do obeisance to him, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Calls Himself King.

After four years he sent to the king, I pray thee, let me go and fulfill my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow when I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then will I serve the Lord. The king said, Go in peace.

Now Absalom had sent men secretly throughout all the tribes of Israel, who should cry, when they heard the sound of the trumpet, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. So Absalom arose and went to Hebron, and two hundred men with him, that went as guests to his feast. They went in their simplicity, and knew not anything of the matter. Also he sent for Ahithophel, David's counsellor. Now Ahithophel was grandfather to Bath-sheba, that had been wife to Uriah the Hittite, whom David had slain; and he bore ill-will to David for this matter.

Then came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are gone after Absalom. Then David said unto his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom; make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

The king's servants said unto him, Behold thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

David's Flight.

So the king went forth, and all the people after him; and he abode that night in a house that was called the Far House. The Six Hundred also went with him under Ittai the Gittite. Then said the king to Ittai, Wherefore goest thou also with us? Return to thy place, and serve the new king. Thou art but a stranger here, and camest but yesterday. Why then should I make thee go with me when I am driven forth? Return thou, and take thy brethren with thee. Mercy and truth be with thee!

Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, there shall thy servant be.

Then David said to Ittai, Pass over Kidron, and he passed over with his men. And all the country wept with a loud voice, as the king passed over the brook, going the way of the wilderness.

And Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites that were with them, came bearing the ark of

the covenant. But David said, Carry the ark back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord he will bring me back again, and I shall see both it and my own house. But if he say, I have no delight in thee, then lo! I am here. Let him do as it seemeth good to him.

Then David went up to the Mount of Olives. Barefoot he was, and he had his head covered; and all the people that were with him had their heads covered, and they also wept sore. And it was told David, Ahithophel is among them that are conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord God, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

And when he was come to the high place on the top of the mount, Hushai the Archite came to him with his coat rent and dust upon his head. David said unto him, If thou passest on with me, thou wilt be a burden unto me; but if thou wilt return to the city, and wilt say to Absalom, As I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I be now thy servant, then thou mayest defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. Zadok and Abiathar the priests are with thee there. Therefore whatsoever thou shalt hear in the king's house, tell it to the priests; and they shall send it unto me by their two sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan. So Hushai returned to Jerusalem; and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

SHIMEI CASTING STONES AT DAVID.

As David went on by the border of Benjamin, one Shimei, that was of the house of Saul, came forth out of his house, cursing as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at his servants; the people and the Six Hundred being on his right hand and his left.

And Shimei said, Get thee out, thou man of blood, thou son of Belial! The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and hath delivered the kingdom into the hands of Absalom, thy son. Behold, thou art taken in thine own evil, because thou art a man of blood.

Absalom Seeking Counsel.

Absalom asked Ahithophel for his counsel. Now the counsel of Ahithophel in those days was esteemed as the oracle of God; by both David and Absalom was it so esteemed. Ahithophel therefore said, Let me choose out now twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David this night; and I will come upon him when he is weary and weak, and take him by surprise. All the people that are with him will flee, and I will smite the king only, and bring back the people to thee. If we slay David, then wilt thou have thy wish, and the people shall be in peace.

This counsel pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. Nevertheless Absalom said, Call now Hushai, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

So Hushai came, and when Absalom told him what Ahithophel had counselled, he said, The counsel of Ahithophel is not good at this time. Thou knowest that thy father and his men are mighty men, and that they are full of wrath, even as a bear that hath been robbed of her whelps. Also thy father is a man of war from his youth. Therefore my counsel is this, Gather all Israel together from Dan to Beer-sheba, till the host be as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and go also to battle in thine own person. We shall come upon him in his hiding-place, and overwhelm him, even as the dew covereth the ground; and of him and of all that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall Israel bring ropes unto that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.

Then Absalom and all the elders said, The counsel of Hushai is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had commanded that the good counsel of Ahithophel should be defeated, that he might bring evil upon Absalom.

Hushai told the whole matter to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and said unto them, Send now to David, and warn him that he tarry not in the wilderness this night, but pass speedily over Jordan, lest he and the people that are with him be destroyed. For he feared even yet that the counsel of Ahithophel might be followed.

They Escape Beyond Jordan.

Then David and all the people that were with him passed quickly over Jordan. By the morning light there was not one that had not passed over.

But when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and went to Giloh, his own city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself.

David came to Mahanaim, and pitched his camp there; and Absalom and the men of Israel passed over Jordan, and pitched in Gilead.

When David was come to Manhanaim, friends brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and

honey, and butter, and sheep, and kine, for David and for the people that were with him in the wilderness, for they said, The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness.

Then David mustered the people that were with him, and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. A third part he gave to Joab, and a third part to Abishai, and a third part to Ittai. And he said to the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth. If we flee, none will care; no, nor if the half of us be slain. There are ten thousand like to us, but not one like thee. Therefore let it be thy part to succor us out of the city.

Then the king said, What seemeth to you best that will I do.

Anxious for Absalom.

And he stood by the gate side, and all the people went out by their hundreds and their thousands. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, Deal gently with the young man Absalom for my sake. And all the people heard him when he thus spoke. So the people went out into the field against the men of Israel, and the two hosts met in a place that was called the wood of Ephraim. And Israel fled before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter, for the battle was scattered over all the face of the country, and more were lost in the wood than fell by the sword.

Absalom, as he fled, cāme upon the servants of David. Now he was riding on the king's mule, and as he rode he went under the boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his hair was caught in the boughs, so that he hanged between heaven and earth; and the mule went away from under him. And a certain man saw it, and went and told Joab, I saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree.

Joab said unto the man, Didst thou see him and not smite him there to the ground? I would have given thee ten shekels of silver and a girdle.

The man said, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Verily I should have contrived mischief against myself; for nothing is hid from the king, and thou thyself would have set thyself against me.

Thrust Through With Darts.

Joab answered, I may not lose time in talking with thee. And he took three darts and thrust them into Absalom while he hung yet alive in the tree; and the young men that bore Joab's armor made an end of him.

After this Joab blew the trumpet, and called back the people from pursuing after Israel. But Absalom they took, and cast into a great pit in the wood, and piled a great heap of stones over him.

Now Absalom in his lifetime had reared a pillar for himself in the King's Vale near to Hebron; for he said, I have no son to keep my name alive; and he called the pillar after his own name.

Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear tidings to the king, how the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies. Joab said, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, because the king's son is dead. But he said to a slave that he had, Run thou and tell the king what thou hast seen. So the man bowed himself and ran.

After which Ahimaaz said again to Joab, Let me run after thy messenger. Joab answered, Why wouldst thou run, seeing that

thou hast nothing more to tell? Nevertheless, when he urged him, he let him run.

Now the slave ran by the way of the hills, and Ahimaaz by the way of the valley of Jordan; and Ahimaaz outran the slave.

The king sat between the two gates; and the watchman that was on the roof above the gates saw a man running, and told the king. The king said, If he be alone, he bringeth tidings. And he came apace, and drew near. Then the watchman saw another man running, and he called the porter and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

The watchman said, The running of the first is as the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. The king answered, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

Then Ahimaaz called unto the king, and said, All is well. And he fell to the earth on his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath held them back that lifted up their hand against my lord the king!

And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not the cause. So the king said, Turn aside and stand here. So he turned aside and stood still. Then came the other and said, Tidings, my lord the king; for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all that rose up against thee.

David's Grief for His Son.

And the king said to the man, Is the young man Absalom safe? The man said, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he wept he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

It was told Joab, saying, The king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. And the joy that day was turned into mourning for all the people; for the people heard how the king was grieved for his son; and the people went by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face, and cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Now there was a certain evil man, whose name was Sheba, a Benjamite. He blew a trumpet and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his house, O Israel. So the men of Israel left following David and went after Sheba, but the men of Judah clave unto their king. Then David said to Amasa, Gather me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou present thyself. And Amasa went, but he tarried beyond the time.

A Deadly Stab.

Then said David to Abishai, Now shall Sheba do us more harm than did Absalom. Take thou my servants and pursue him, lest he get into some fenced city, and escape us. So Abishai went out with Joab's men, and with the Six Hundred, to pursue after Sheba.

When they were by the great stone at Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab had on him his soldier's cloak, and beneath it his sword hanging from the belt; and as he went to greet Amasa, the sword chanced to fall from his sheath. Then Joab picked it from the ground with his left hand, and with his right hand he took hold of Amasa's beard to kiss him, saying, Art thou in health, my brother? But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's left hand.

Then Joab smote him unawares with the sword under the fifth rib, nor needed to smite him again, for he fell dead. And Joab and Abishai pursued after Sheba. Then one of the field, and cast a cloth over him. After this all the people followed Joab.

After these things David was moved in the pride of his heart to number Israel; and

DAVID INSTRUCTING JOAB TO NUMBER THE PEOPLE.

Joab's servants cried, He that is for David, let him follow after Joab; and when he saw that all the people tarried where they saw Amasa lying in his blood in the midst of the highway, he took him from the highway into he said to Joab, Go through all the tribes and take the number of the people.

Joab said to the king, The Lord thy God add to the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my

lord the king may see it; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

Nevertheless the word of the king prevailed against Joab. So he and the captains of the host went through all the land numbering the people, and at the end of nine months and twenty days they came again to Jerusalem, and gave the number of the people to the king. Of Israel there were eight hundred thousand fighting men, and of Judah five hundred thousand. But David's heart smote him that he had done this thing.

AN ANGEL GOES FORTH TO SMITE THE LAND.

The numbering of the people by David was an act of distrust in God. Instead of

trusting the Lord to give success to his army, he wished to know before he went forth to any more battles that he had an army able to prevail against his foes. If he had felt perfect trust in the Lord of Hosts he would not have stopped to ask whether his army was great or small.

strait. Let me fall down into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, and there died of the people seventy thousand men.

And David saw the angel of the Lord by the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite,

DAVID BUILDS A NEW ALTAR.

Then Gad, David's seer, came to him and said, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things. Choose thee one of them that I may do it unto thee. Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in the land?

David said unto Gad, I am in a great

that was in the stronghold of Jerusalem. And David said, I have sinned, and done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

That day came Gad, the seer, to David, and said, Go up, rear an altar to the Lord in the thrashing-floor of Araunah. And David

did as the Lord commanded. And Araunah saw the king and his servants coming, and he went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face to the ground.

Araunah said to the king, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? The king answered, To buy the thrashing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

Then Araunah said to David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good to him. Behold, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and the thrashing instruments and harness of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give to the king, saying, The Lord thy God accept thine offering.

But the king said, Nay, but I will buy these things of thee for a price; neither will I offer burnt-offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.

So David gave to Araunah for the thrashing-floor and for the oxen and for the instruments fifty shekels of gold, that is, about five hundred dollars. And he built there an altar, and offered sacrifice. And after this the plague was stayed.

When David was old, Adonijah, his eldest son, thought in his heart to be king. He was a very goodly man, and younger than Absalom; and his father had never thwarted him at any time. And he conferred with Joak and Abiathar, and they followed him; but Zadok and Nathan, and the rest of the Six Hundred were against him.

Adonijah made a great feast at the Fuller's Fountain, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the king's servants, but Nathan and Benaiah and Solomon and the Six Hundred he called not.

They Ask David About It.

Nathan said to Bathsheba, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah is king, and David our lord knoweth it not? Let me, I pray thee, give thee wise counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. Go, get thee in unto King David, and say, Didst thou not swear unto thine handmaid that Solomon, my son, should reign after thee? Why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou talkest there with the king, I also will come in and confirm thy words.

So Bathsheba went in unto the king, and did obeisance, and spoke as Nathan had bidden her; and she told him what Adonijah had done. While she yet talked with the king Nathan came in and bowed himself to the ground before the king, and he said, My lord, O king, is it thy pleasure that Adonijah should reign after thee? Lo! he hath made a great feast, and called thereto the king's sons and the captains of the host, and they eat and drink before him, and shout, God save King Adonijah.

Then the king said to Bathsheba, As the Lord liveth that hath delivered me all my life, even as I sware, saying, Solomon, thy son, shall reign even so will I do this day.

CHAPTER XVIII.

B. C. 1015.

THE STORY OF SOLOMON—DAVID'S CHOICE OF A KING—THE ANOINTING—BUILDING THE TEMPLE—THE ARK PLACED IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES—THE DEDICATION OF THE LORD'S HOUSE—SOLOMON PUNISHES WRONG-DOERS—DISPUTE ABOUT A CHILD—VISIT FROM THE QUEEN OF SHEBA—A MAGNIFICENT THRONE—HORSES AND CHARIOTS—SIN OF IDOLATRY—SOLOMON'S PROVERBS—THE FOOL AND WISE MAN—THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

BATHSHEBA, who had been the wife of Uriah the Hittite, became the wife of King David, and had a son, whom his father called Solomon, which is by interpretation "peaceful;" for having been himself a man of war, he desired that the days of his child should be days of peace. And there came a message from the Lord by the hand of Nathan the prophet that the child should have also the name of Jedidiah—that is to say, "Beloved of Jehovah." And King David loved him more than his other sons.

Now when David was old and feeble, Adonijah the son of Haggith, and own brother to Absalom, being now the eldest of the princes, thought to make himself king in his father's room. To this end he conferred with Joab, the captain of the host, and Abiathar the high priest, and they helped him; but Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and the king's brother, and the rest of the mighty men that had been with David in the wilderness, were against him.

And when Adonijah made a great feast at the Fuller's Fountain to Joab and the rest of his followers, Nathan came to Bathsheba, and said to her, Dost thou not know that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? Let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life and the life of thy son Solomon. Go, get thee in unto King David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, sware unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me? Why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I will come in and confirm thy words.

Who Was to be King.

And Bathsheba went in unto the king, and spoke according to these words. She said also, The eyes of all Israel are upon thee, O king, for they wait till thou tell them who shall be king after thee. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and Solomon my son shall be counted offenders.

While she talked with the king, Nathan the prophet came to the palace; and it was told the king, Behold, Nathan the prophet.

So the king sent for him, and Bathsheba went out from David's presence. And when Nathan was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. And he said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign, and shall sit upon my throne after me? And he told him according to all that Bathsheba had said.

Then King David said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

And the king said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord King David live for ever.

And King David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. Then these three came and stood before the king.

The King's Mule.

The king said unto them, Take with you the king's guards, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon my own mule, and bring him down to the valley of Siloam, and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there to be king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon. After that ye shall come up after him, that he may sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead, for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

Then Benaiah answered, So be it: may God do so. As he has been with my lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord David.

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the guard went down to Siloam, and Solomon went with them, riding on the king's mule, on which none but the king might ride. And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet, and the people shouted, God save King Solomon.

Now when Adonijah heard what had happened he arose and fled to the tabernacle, and laid hold of the horns of the altar.

They told King Solomon, saying, Adonijah feareth for his life: for he hath caught hold of the horns of the altar, saying, Let King Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground; but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die.

So they brought down Adonijah from the altar; and he came and bowed himself to King Solomon. And Solomon said to him, Go to thine house.

After these things David gathered all the princes of Israel, and all the captains of the army, and all the stewards of the king's possessions to Jerusalem.

The Temple to be Built.

And he stood upon his feet before them, and said, I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant: but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood. Solomon thy son shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. Do ye, therefore, keep all the commandments of the Lord your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the Lord God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind:

for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee;

courses of the priests and Levites, and all the work of service of the house; and gold for all the things that should be of gold, and

SOLOMON IS CROWNED KING.

but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Then David gave to Solomon the pattern of the house that he should build; and the

silver for all the things that should be of silver; and he said to him, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; and fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my

God, will be with thee; he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee, till thou hast finished all the work for his house.

And yet again after this David gathered all the congregation of Israel, and said to them, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.

And he told them what treasure he had prepared for the building of the house, and said, Who then is willing this day to consecrate his service unto the Lord?

They Praise the Lord.

Then the chief of the fathers, and the princes of the tribes, and all the people, offered willingly of their substance.

Wherefore David blessed the Lord before the congregation, and said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Then David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. So all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads and worshipped.

On the morrow they offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings unto the Lord—a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs; and they did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness. So they made Solomon the son of David king a second time.

After these things the time came for David to die; and Solomon sat upon his throne, and his kingdom was established greatly.

But Adonijah the son of Haggith was not content that he should be passed over. Therefore he went to Bathsheba, the queen-mother. And Bathsheba said, Comest thou peaceably?

He answered, Peaceably; and now I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

Adonijah Seeks a Wife.

Then he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: nevertheless the kingdom is become my brother's: for it was his from the Lord. And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And Bathsheba said, Say on.

And he said, Speak I pray thee, unto the king, that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

Now Abishag the Shunammite had been one of the wives of King David; and it was the custom that when the king was dead his wives should not be given to another, except only to him that should reign in his stead. Adonijah, therefore, did this thing in subtlety, to the intent that he might seem to Israel to be king after his father.

Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. So she went to King Solomon, to speak for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and said to his servants, set a seat for the king's mother. And she sat on his right hand.

Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; say me not nay. And the king said, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. Then she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

King Solomon answered, And why dost thou only ask Abishag the Shauammite for my brother Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my elder brother, yea, ask it for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

And he sware by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. And he sent Benaiah, the captain of the host, to slay him.

Then the king said to Abiathar the high priest, Get thee to Anathoth, to thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: yet I will not put thee to death, because thou barest the ark before David my father, and because thou wast afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

The Fate of Joab.

So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being high priest. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord which said to Eli, that his house should be cast out from the priesthood.

When Joab heard that Adonijah had been slain, and that Abiathar was banished, he fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold of the horns of the altar. It was told King Solomon that Joab had fled to the tabernacle of the Lord, and that he was by the altar. Then Solomon said to Benaiah, Go fall upon him.

Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord, and said to Joab, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. Benaiah brought word to the king what Joab had answered him.

The king said, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him there, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from my father's house. For he slew two men more righteous and better than he, David my father not knowing, namely, Abner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa, captain of the host of Judah.

Then the king sent for Shimei, who had cursed David when he fled before the face of Absalom—for he was of the house of Saul—and said to him, Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither; for know that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.

And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. But at the end of three years two of his servants ran away to Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath; and when Shimei heard that his servants were in Gath, he went to Achish at Gath to seek his servants; and he brought them back from Gath.

Evil-Doers Punished.

Then the king sent for Shimei, and said unto him, Did not I make thee swear, protesting unto thee, that on the day when thou wentest forth any whither out of Jerusalem, thou shouldest surely die? And thou saidst unto me, The word is good. Why then hast not thou kept the oath that thou swarest before the Lord, and the commandment that I charged thee with? Thou knowest all the wickedness which thy heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: now shall the Lord requite it upon thine head.

Then the king commanded Benaiah that he should slay Shimei.

Thus did King Solomon punish the evil-doers, even as his father had commanded him. But to Chimham the son of Barzillai, who had nourished King David and his men

when they fled over Jordan from Absalom, he showed great kindness. For Chimham dwelt at Bethlehem, and did eat at the king's table all the days of his life.

When King Solomon was now firmly established on the throne of David his father, he went to Gibeon, to the high place, to sacrifice there, for the people still sacrificed in the high places. A thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer before the altar in Gibeon.

Solomon Chooses Wisdom.

And the Lord appeared unto Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

Then Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David great bounty, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart; and thou hast continued to him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit upon his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king in the room of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

And thy servant is in the midst of the people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy people that is so great?

And it pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, or riches, or the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding that thou mayest judge thy people wisely: Behold, I have done according to thy words: I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall arise any like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my judgments, as thy father David did walk, then will I lengthen thy days.

And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream.

The Two Women.

Solomon came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants. And on a certain day, as he sat, after his custom, to judge the people, it happened that there came two women before him.

One of the women said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in the same house. This woman's child died; for she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while I slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom; for there were but three days difference of age between them. In the morning, it was dead; but when I looked at it more nearly in the light, I saw that the dead child was not my own son.

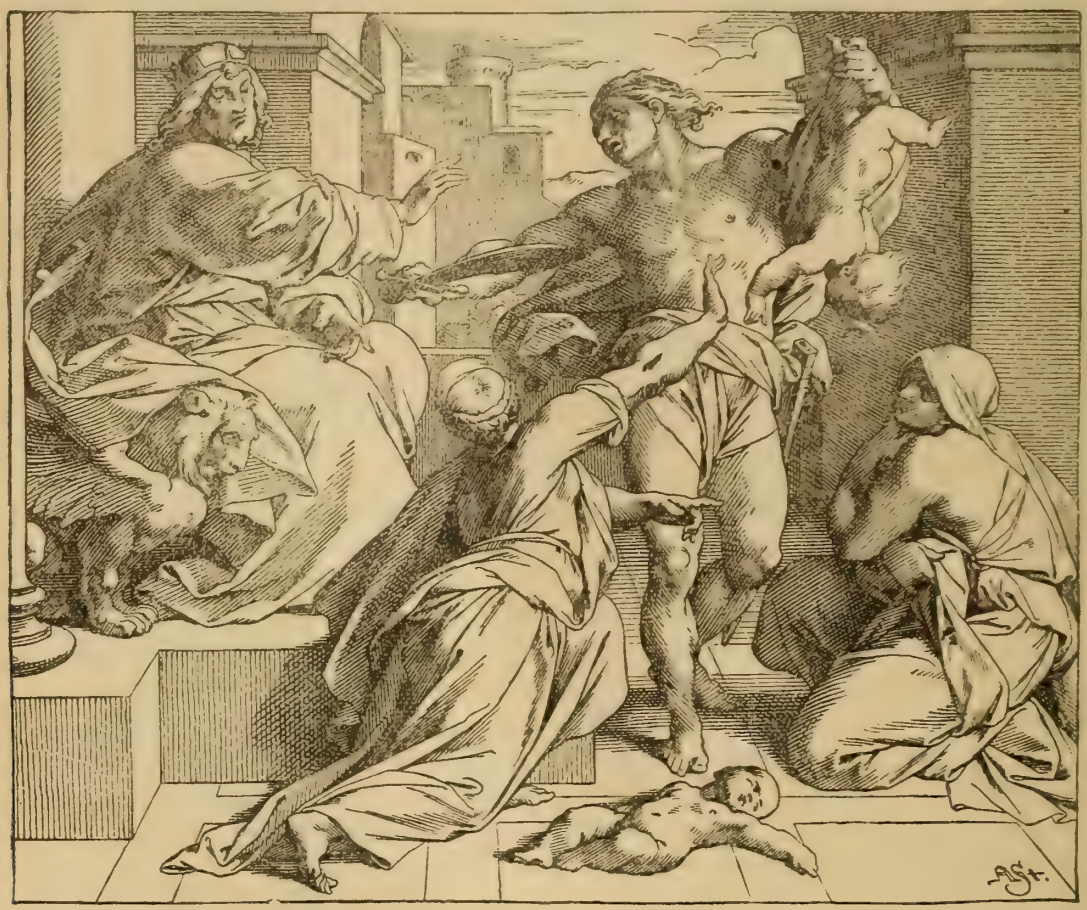
The other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thine. Then the first answered again, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is mine. Thus they spoke before the king.

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and the dead is thine; and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and mine is the living. Bring me a sword.

So they brought the king a sword. And

the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

Then spoke the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her heart yearned for her son, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.



THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: for she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they knew that the wisdom from God was in him to do judgment.

In other things also did God give to Solomon wisdom, and very much understanding, and largeness of heart, so that he knew things as much beyond all counting as is the sand on the seashore. His wisdom excelled all the wisdom of the Chaldæns, and all the wisdom of Egypt. He spoke three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came men from all the kingdoms of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; for the fame of it had gone abroad.

Solomon was king over all Israel. He reigned also over all the kingdoms from the

HUSBANDMEN OF ANCIENT PALESTINE GOING FORTH TO WORK.

ford of Euphrates to Gath. All the kings of the cities served him, and brought him tribute. And he himself marched against Hamath and took it. Also he made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, for he took Pharoah's daughter to wife. And Pharaoh gave him Geshur with his daughter, having taken it and slain the Canaanites that were therein.

Peace and Plenty.

He had peace on all sides round about him; and Judah and Israel dwelt securely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. Very many were they, even as the sand which is by the sea for multitude, eating and drinking and making merry.

The day's provision for the king's court was thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty measures of meal, ten fat oxen fed in stalls, and twenty oxen fed in the meadows, and an hundred sheep, besides wild goats and gazelles and wild oxen, and other choice things. And the king had twelve officers who made provision for these things, each man for one month in the year.

Also Solomon had forty thousand stalls for the horses of his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And the officers that provided for the king's table provided also his horses barley and straw, bringing them to the places where the horses were, for the king kept them in divers parts of his dominions.

When Hiram king of Tyre heard that Solomon was anointed king in the room of his father David, he sent his servants to greet him; for Hiram had ever been a lover of David.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how David my father could not build a house for the Lord his God by reason of the wars that were round about him. But now the Lord hath given me rest; neither have I any adversary or trouble. Therefore I propose to build a house unto the name of the Lord, even as the Lord spoke unto David, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name. Now therefore command that they hew me cedar-trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants. I will give hire unto thy servants as thou shalt appoint; for there are none among us that are skillful to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

When Hiram heard these words he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath given unto David a wise son to rule over this great people.

Also he sent to Solomon, saying, I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar and fir. My servants shall bring it down from Lebanon to the sea; and I will convey it by sea in floats to the place that thou shalt appoint. And do thou give me food for my household.

Building the Temple.

So Hiram gave to Solomon cedar-trees and fir-trees according as he desired. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat and twenty measures of pure oil.

And Solomon raised a levy of thirty thousand men out of all Israel to work in Lebanon. Three courses he made of them, each of ten thousand men. And each course was for one month in Lebanon, and for two months at home. Also he had seventy thousand that bare burdens, and eighty thousand that were hewers in the mountains. These were of the Canaanites that dwelt in the land.

And the king commanded, and they brought great hewed stones, very costly,

which his builders and the builders of Hiram had hewed to lay the foundation of the house. Much stone also and timber did the hewers prepare for the building of the house.

of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.

THE ARK BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE BY SOLOMON.

In the fourth year of his reign did Solomon begin to build the house of the Lord; and in the eleventh year of his reign he finished it. So was he seven years and six months in building it. The house was built

The length of the house was sixty cubits, and the breadth twenty, and the height thirty; and before it was a porch, that was built along the whole breadth of the house, and was ten cubits deep. And on each side of

the house, against the wall, were chambers, in three stories; each story was five cubits high; and the breadth of the lowest was five cubits, of the next six, and of the third seven. Above the topmost story were windows in the walls of the house, to light the Holy Place; but in the oracle, that is, the Holy of Holies, were no windows.

In the twelfth year of his reign, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, King Solomon dedicated the house which he had built. He assembled all the elders of Israel, and the heads of the tribes, and the chief of the fathers that they might bring up the ark of the covenant out of the city of David.

So the priests took up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle that Moses had made in the wilderness, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, and brought them into the house. And the priests brought the ark into the Holy of Holies, and put it under the wings of the cherubim. And they drew out the staves by which the ark was carried, so that the ends thereof could be seen in the Holy Place.

SOLOMON DEDICATING THE TEMPLE.

There was nothing in the ark save the two

tables of stone which Moses put there in Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

And when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, the cloud of the presence of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.

Then spoke Solomon, with his face towards the oracle, O Lord, I have built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever.

And he turned his face to the outer court, and blessed all the congregation of Israel; and all the congregation stood.

Prayer at the Dedication.

After this he stood before the brazen altar in the court of the priests on a platform of brass, that he might be seen of the people; and he knelt upon his knees, and spread forth his hands and prayed to the Lord God of Israel, saying:

Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart; who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou didst promise him; thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day, Now, therefore, keep thy promise that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me, as thou hast walked before me.

Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded. Yet have thou respect unto my prayer, that thine eyes may be open towards this house day and night, even towards the place of which thou hast said, my name shall be there. Hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive.

He Blesses the Congregation.

When Solomon had made an end of praying this prayer, he rose up from his knees, and blessed all the congregation. A great feast did Solomon, and all Israel with him, hold unto the Lord, from Hamath in the north to the river of Egypt. For seven days they kept it, and for seven days also they kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

And on the eighth day Solomon sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

Solomon, when he had finished building the house of the Lord, built a house for himself. He built it on the hill of the temple; and it had three parts.

The first part was the House of the Forest of Lebanon, which had pillars like to a forest of cedar-trees. Three rows of pillars it had, and fifteen pillars in each. There was also a porch with pillars; and the Porch of Judgment for the throne, whereon he sat, judging the people. The second part was the Palace of Pharaoh's daughter, wherein were the apartments of the women. The third part was the king's own house, where he dwelt.

Thirteen years was King Solomon in building his house after he had finished building the temple. And when he had finished them both, he gave to Hiram king of Tyre twenty cities in the land of Galilee; for Hiram had

furnished Solomon with cedar-trees, and fir-trees, and gold, according to all his desire. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul. The meaning of Cabul is dirty.

Also he had a navy of ships in Ezion-gaber, whither he himself went to oversee them. Hiram sent with the servants of Solomon his own servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea; and they fetched gold from Ophir and brought it to King Solomon.

THE ARK AND FURNITURE OF THE TEMPLE.

Solomon also built the fortress of Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Geshur (after Pharaoh king of Egypt had taken it and burnt it with fire), and Lower Beth-horon, and Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, which is also called Palmyra. Cities of store, also, he built, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horse-men, and pleasure places in Jerusalem and in Lebanon.

And another navy of ships sailed to Tarshish.

And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, and how the Lord had given him great wisdom, she came to prove him with hard questions. With a very great train did she come to Jerusalem, with camels that bore spices, and very much gold, and

precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the queen that he told her not.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITING SOLOMON.

And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and how he went in his state to the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in my own land of thy acts and thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words till I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy

wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore did he set thee on the throne, to do judgment and justice.

And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to Solomon.

King Solomon gave unto the queen whatsoever she asked, besides what he gave her of his royal bounty. And she departed to her own country.

The weight of gold that came to King Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, probably not less than sixteen million dollars. Other gold he had from the merchantmen, and from spice merchants, and from the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.

King Solomon made of the gold which came to him two hundred targets of beaten gold, each target having six hundred shekels of gold; and three hundred shields, each with three hundred shekels of gold; and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

A Throne of Ivory and Gold.

Moreover, the king made a great throne, overlaid with ivory and gold. The throne had six steps; and on each step on either side was a lion—twelve lions in all. The top of the throne was round behind; and there were arms on either side of the seat, and beside each arm a lion. There was not the like made in any kingdom.

All Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold; none were of silver: for silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. He made it as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar to abound as the sycamore in the plain of the sea. The king's ships also brought him ivory, and apes, and almug trees.

All the countries round about sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God put in his heart; and they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, and horses, and mules.

But Solomon took to himself many wives besides the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; nations of which the Lord had said to the children of Israel, Ye shall not take to you wives from them, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. And when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, so that he went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and Molech the abomination of the Ammonites.

Solomon's Idolatry.

He built an high place for Chemosh on the Mount of Olives, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his strange wives, building high places where they might burn incense and sacrifice unto their gods.

And the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this very thing that he should not go after other gods. Therefore the Lord said to him, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Nothwithstanding I will not do it in thy days, for David thy father's sake; but I will do it in thy son's days. Nor will I rend away all the

kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen. And the Lord raised up adversaries against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, and Rezon of Zobah.

This Hadad was of the royal house in Edom; and when the Edomites had been defeated at the Valley of Salt, and Joab had been sent to slay all the males in Edom (for six months did Joab stay in the land with the host), certain of the royal servants fled with this Hadad, being yet a child. From the town of Midian they fled, and came to Paran, which is desert, and lieth to the south of Judah; and from Paran they went down into Egypt.

And when Hadad grew to be a man he found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, Tahpenes the queen. And when Hadad heard that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab was dead, he said to Pharaoh, Let me depart that I may go to my own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that thou seekest to go to thine own country? And Hadad answered, Nothing; yet let me go. So Hadad returned to Edom, and was an adversary to Solomon.

As for Rezon, he was a Syrian of Zobah, and when David had smitten Hadad-ezer king of the Syrians, Rezon gathered to him-

KINGS BRINGING GIFTS TO SOLOMON.

self a band of men, and made himself king in Damascus.

These two were adversaries to Solomon; and the third was Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Solomon reigned over Israel forty years; and he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father; and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

tained in the Book of Proverbs which forms a part of the Old Testament. They are all short sentences, each of which tells us some important truth. They show the wisdom of the king, and are excellent rules to live by.

In one of the chapters the fool and the wise man are described, and the following is what Solomon says concerning them:

SOLOMON'S PICTURE OF THE FOOL AND THE WISE MAN.

Much is said about Solomon in the 72d Psalm. This was written by David. It gives a beautiful picture of Solomon judging the people with righteousness, and also describes the kings of the earth bringing presents to him.

We are told that Solomon sought out and set in order many proverbs. These are con-

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life:

but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

The heart of him that hath understanding is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellers they are established.

A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility.

The Good Woman.

Solomon also gives us a beautiful picture of the virtuous woman. She makes home happy, and her children call her blessed. Her works are works of gentleness and love, and these praise her. She is thus described by the wisest man that ever lived:

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry: her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give of her the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

CHAPTER XIX.

B. C. 910.

THE STORY OF ELIJAH—FED BY RAVENS—THE WIDOW'S CRUSE OF OIL AND BARREL OF MEAL—STORY OF THE DEAD CHILD—THE PROPHET ON CARMEL—RAIN IN ANSWER TO PRAYER—UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE—ELIJAH ON MOUNT HOREB—NABOTH AND HIS VINEYARD—THE ARROW THAT SMOTE AHAB—AHAZIAH COMES TO THE THRONE—JEHU ANOINTED KING—DEATH OF JEZEBEL—ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN.

KING AHAB the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. For, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and to worship the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan, he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Eth-baal, king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. Baal was a god and Ashtaroth was a goddess of the Sidonians, who were the inhabitants of Sidon, a city of Phoenicia, which was outside the borders of Israel.

Ahab reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had made in Samaria. Also he made a grove; and he did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him; for he did after all the abominations of the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. In all these things, and in persecuting the prophets of the Lord, Jezebel his wife stirred him up.

Ahab's marriage with Jezebel was the beginning of great evils. For whereas Jeroboam and the kings that came after him had caused Israel to sin against the Lord by worshipping the calves that had been set up in Bethel and Dan, Ahab constrained his people to transgress far more grievously, even by following Baal and Ashtaroth.

He worshipped these false gods with much pomp and splendor; thus we hear of four hundred and fifty priests of Baal that were fed at Jezebel's table, and of four hundred priests of the grove; but he persecuted them that were still faithful to Jehovah. For the armed messengers of the queen went through the land, throwing down the altars of the Lord, and slaying all such as would not bow the knee to Baal.

Against the prophets of Jehovah did Ahab and Jezebel, his wife, rage especially. Many were killed with the sword, and they that escaped were content to hide themselves in caverns and dens of the earth.

He Hid Them in Caves.

Yet there were some that were found faithful even in the king's court; of such was Obadiah, the king's steward, who took a hundred of the Lord's prophets and hid them in two caves, fifty in each, and fed them there.

Then the Lord sent Elijah of Tishbi, in the land of Gilead, to King Ahab. He was a dweller in the wilderness, and was clad in a garment of skin, and wore a leathern girdle about his loins. Elijah stood before Ahab as he sat on his throne, and said, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I

stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And when he had said this he turned away and was seen no more.

But when there had been drought for a long time, and the famine began to be sore in the land, Ahab bethought him of the man that had denounced this judgment against him and his people. And he sent throughout all the land of Israel, and to all the nations round about, seeking for him. To whomsoever he sent he made him swear that Elijah was not with him; but still he could not find him.

Elijah was concealed, for the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thee by the watercourse of Cherith, that floweth into Jordan. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord; for he dwelt by the watercourse of Cherith that floweth into Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank from the watercourse. And after a while the watercourse dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Arise get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS.

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, a widow woman was there gathering of sticks; and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and I am gathering sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day when the Lord shall send rain upon the earth.

The Child Restored.

And she went and did according to the word of Elijah; and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Elijah.

After these things the son of the woman of the house fell sick, and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him. And the woman said to Elijah, What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? Didst thou come hither to call my sins to remembrance. And Elijah said, Give me thy son.

And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. The woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

At the end of the third year the Lord said to Elijah, Go, show thyself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth. Now about this time King Ahab said to Obadiah, his steward, Go throughout the land to all fountains of water and brooks. Peradventure we may find grass to save such of the horses and mules as are left. So they divided the land between them—Ahab went one way and Obadiah went another.

And as Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him; and Obadiah knew him for the prophet that had stood before Ahab, and he fell on his face before him, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered, I am; go, tell thy lord, Elijah is here.

He Meets the King.

Then Obadiah said, How have I sinned, that thou wouldst give Ahab occasion to slay me? There is no nation or kingdom whither he hath not sent to seek thee; and now thou biddest me say, Elijah is here. But so soon as I shall have gone from thee, the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and when I shall have told Ahab, and he cannot find thee, then he will slay me. Truly I have served the Lord from my youth. Doth not my lord know how I saved an hundred men when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord. Elijah answered, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to Ahab to-day.

So Obadiah told Ahab, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. And when Ahab saw him he said, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? But Elijah answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house. Now gather to Mount Carmel all the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the groves; I will be there also. Let all the people also be gathered to the same place, that they may judge between us.

And Ahab did so; and all the people stood round on a level place on the top of Mount Carmel. And Elijah and the prophets of Baal stood in the midst—he by himself and they by themselves. Then Elijah said to the king and to the people, Let the prophets of Baal furnish now two bullocks —for they are four hundred and fifty men, and I but one—and let them cut their bullock in pieces, and put his flesh on their altar, but put no fire under; and I will do the same with my bullock. They shall call on the name of their god, and I will call on the name of mine; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people said, It is well spoken.

ELIJAH RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON.

Then the prophets of Baal took their bullock and put it on the altar which they had built. And they called on Baal from morning until noon, crying, O Baal, hear us! But there was no voice, nor any that answered; and they leaped upon the altar. And when it was noon Elijah mocked them, saying, Cry aloud; for either he meditateth or is busy with other things, and doth not hear you; or he is on a journey; or, perchance, he is asleep, and must be awakened.

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them. Thus they did till it was time of offering the evening sacrifice, three o'clock in the afternoon; but there was no voice, nor any that answered or regarded.

Then Elijah built again the altar of Jehovah that was in the place, and had been broken down. With twelve stones he built it, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. Round about it he made a trench as great as would contain two measures of seed, or six gallons; and he put the wood in order on the altar, and laid the pieces of the bullock on the altar, and commanded that water should be poured upon it three times, till the whole was drenched through and through, and even the trench filled with water.

Fire from Heaven.

And at the time of the evening sacrifice he prayed, and said, Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hear me. Jehovah, hear me this day in fire, and let all the people know that thou art Jehovah, the God of this Israel, and that I am thy servant, and through thee have done all these things. Hear me, O Jehovah; hear me, and let this people know that thou, Jehovah, art the God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again.

And when he had done speaking, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it they fell on their faces, and said, Jehovah is the God; Jehovah is the God.

Then Elijah said to the people, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. So they took them, and Elijah slew them by the brook Kishon.

Then Elijah said unto Ahab, for Ahab had come down with him to the brook, Get thee up to the hill again; eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and drink.

And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself upon the ground, and put his face between his knees.

And he said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And the servant went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And Elijah said, Go again seven times.

At the seventh time the man said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like unto a man's hand. Then the prophet said, Go up, tell Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And in the meanwhile the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the gate of Jezreel.

He Flees for His Life.

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

And when he heard that he was greatly afraid, and rose and fled for his life, till he came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah. And he left his servant at Beer-sheba, but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a tree of broom: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my own life, for I am not better than my fathers.

And as he lay and slept under the broom, an angel touched him, and said, Arise, eat. And he looked, and there was a cake baked among the embers, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him again to sleep.

The angel of the Lord came again a second time, and said, Arise, eat again; for

otherwise the journey will be too great for thee. So he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, till he came to Horeb, the mount of God. And he came into the

down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and they seek my life to take it away.

And the voice said, Go forth to-morrow, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.

ELIJAH SLAYING THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

cave, and passed the night there. As he slept the Lord said to him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

He said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, broken

Elijah went forth; and the Lord passed by.

A great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And

after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire.

And after the fire a still small voice. When Elijah heard the voice, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the mouth of the cave. And there came a voice to him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

ELIJAH AT THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE.

And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain the prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

Then the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus. Thou shalt go and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat, of Abelmeholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. But know that I will have seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and all the mouths which have not kissed him.

So Elijah departed from Horeb, and he journeyed to the wilderness of Damascus.

Now Ahab coveted a vineyard that was hard by his palace in Jezreel, for he was

minded to make of it a garden of herbs; and he said to him whose vineyard it was, a certain Naboth, Give me thy vineyard, and I will give thee a better vineyard for it; or else, if thou wilt, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

But Naboth said, God forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee! And Ahab, when he heard this, was much displeased, so that he lay down on his bed and would eat nothing.

A Wicked Plot.

But Jezebel, his wife, when she had heard what ailed him, said, Arise, eat and drink and be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth. So she sent letters to the elders of Jezreel, that they should suborn false witnesses against Naboth, who should testify against him that he had blasphemed God and the king. And the elders did so. They proclaimed a fast, and called an assembly, and because Naboth was a great man in Jezreel, they set him on high among the people. And as he sat, the false witnesses came, and testified against him.

Then sentence was pronounced, and he was carried out of the city, and was stoned with stones, he and his sons with him.

When Jezebel heard that Naboth was dead, she said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, which he refused to give thee for money; for he is not alive, but dead.

So Ahab went down to take possession, with Jehu and Bidkar, his captains, riding behind him. But when he was come to the place, Elijah, the prophet of Tishbi, stood before him, and said to him, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?

And Elijah answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Therefore hear the word of the Lord. In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood. And I will utterly destroy thy house; and Jezebel the dogs shall eat by the wall of Jezreel. But Ahab, when he heard these words, humbled himself, and the sentence against him was delayed for a while.

Ahab Makes War.

Now Benhadad, the king of Syria, had covenanted to restore the cities which his father had taken from Omri, of which cities Ramoth in the land of Gilead was one; and when three years had passed, and the king of Syria delayed to do the thing which he promised, it came into Ahab's heart to make war upon him.

And when Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, came to Samaria—for Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram had taken to wife Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab—Ahab said to him, Wilt thou go up with me to battle at Ramoth-in-Gilead? Jehoshaphat answered, I am as thou art; my people as thy people; my horses as thy horses. Only he would have the king inquire of the Lord whether they should do well to go up. So Ahab called together the prophets of Baal, about four hundred men, and inquired of them, shall I go up to Ramoth-in-Gilead, or shall I forbear? And they answered with one voice, Go up, and the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

But one of the Lord's prophets foretold evil to Ahab if he went into battle. Ahab was greatly displeased and commanded that he should be put in prison and fed with the bread and water of affliction.

So Ahab went up to Ramoth-in-Gilead, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, with him. And Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, I will

ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS AT THE BROOK CHERITH.

disguise myself; and put thou on thy robes. So he disguised himself and entered into the battle. Now the king of Syria had commanded his captains that they should fight neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel.

When therefore they saw Jehoshaphat in his robes they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. So they knew he was not the king of Israel, and left pursuing him. Nevertheless Ahab did not escape the sentence that had been pronounced against him; for a certain man, shooting an arrow from his bow at random, smote him where the helmet is joined to the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn and carry me out of the battle.

Then the battle waxed fiercer and fiercer all that day; and the king, that his host might make head against the Syrians, bade his servants prop him up in his chariot. At evening he died; and about the going down of the sun there went this proclamation throughout the host, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

THE DEATH OF KING AHAB.

They brought the body of the king to Samaria, and buried him there. His chariot and his armor they washed in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked his blood.

And Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, was made king in his place. He did wickedly, as his father had done. And he fell down from an upper chamber in his palace and was hurt, and made sick. Then he sent messengers to

Baal-zebub, the idol of the Philistines, to ask whether he would get well of his sickness.

And the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, Go up to meet the messengers of Ahaziah, and say to them, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to ask Baal-zebub, the idol of the Philistines? Now, therefore, the Lord says that Ahaziah shall not rise up from that bed on which he is laid, but shall surely die.

Three Captains and Their Men.

And Elijah met the messengers, and spoke to them the words that the Lord commanded. And they came to Ahaziah again, and he said to them, Why are you come back so soon? They answered, There came a man to meet us, who said, Go back to king Ahaziah and tell him, that because he has sent to ask of the idol Baal-zebub, he shall not rise up from the bed on which he is laid, but shall surely die. The king said to the messengers, What sort of a man was he that met you and told you these words? They answered, He was a hairy man, with a girdle of leather about his loins. And Ahaziah said, It is Elijah.

Then the king was displeased, and sent a captain of his army, with fifty soldiers, to take Elijah, and bring him to the king. And they came, and found him sitting on the top of a hill; and the captain called to him, and said, Thou prophet, the king commands thee to come down. Elijah answered, If I be a prophet, let fire come down from heaven and burn up thee and thy fifty men. And there came down fire from heaven, and burned up the captain and the fifty men who were with him.

And Ahaziah sent another captain with fifty men, and he came to Elijah and called to him, saying, Thou prophet, the king commands thee to come down quickly. Elijah answered, If I be a prophet, let fire come down from heaven and burn up thee and thy fifty men. Then fire came down again from heaven, and burned up the captain and his fifty men.

And Ahaziah sent a third captain with fifty men more. But when he came to the place where Elijah was, he fell on his knees before him, and said, O prophet, I pray thee, save my life and the lives of these fifty men, thy servants. Let not the fire come down from heaven and burn us, as it burned the two captains, with their men, who were here before us.

Story of Jehu.

And the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, Go with him, be not afraid. So Elijah went with him to the king. And Elijah said to the king, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the idol of the Philistines, instead of sending to me, the God of Israel, therefore thou shalt not rise up from the bed on which thou art laid, but shalt surely die. So Ahaziah died, as Elijah told him, and Jehoram, his brother, was made king over the ten tribes of Israel. Another Ahaziah about this time was king in Judah.

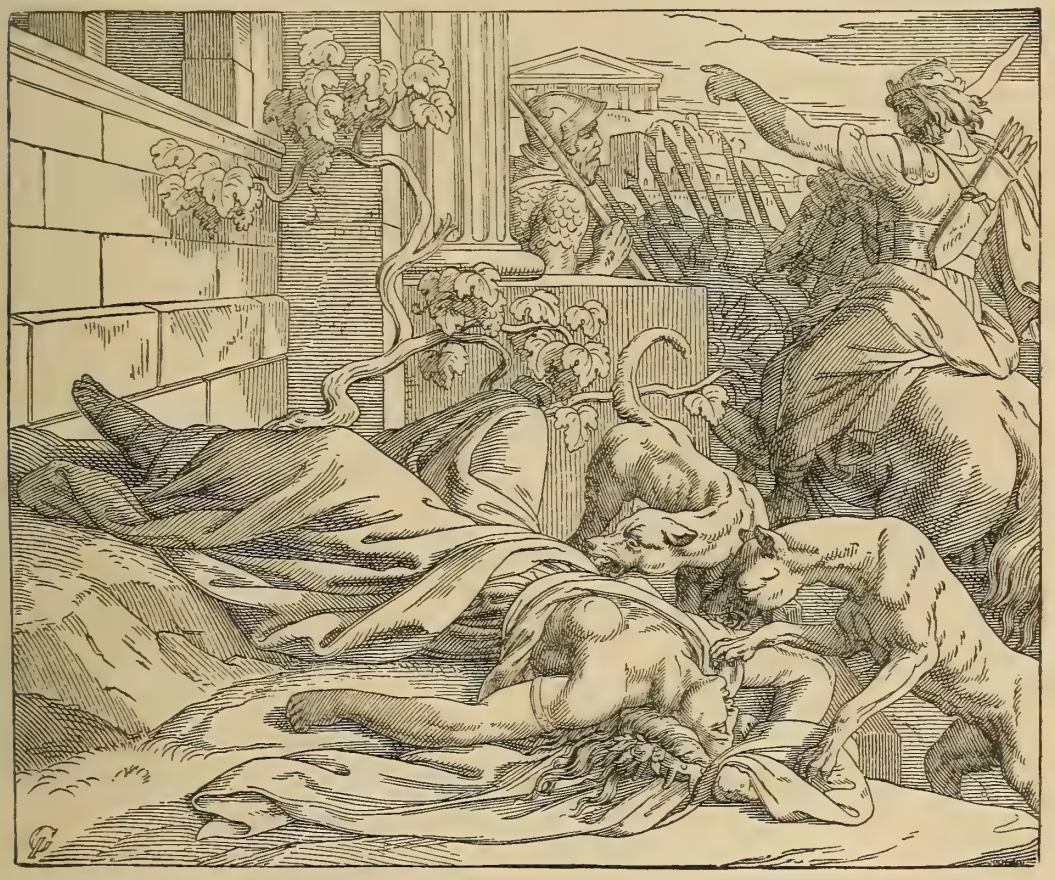
It happened that in the twelfth year of Jehoram, Elisha the prophet called a certain young man of the school of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-in-Gilead; and when thou comest thither look out Jehu, the son of Nimshi, and take him apart from his brethren into an inner chamber. Then take the box of oil, and pour it upon his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

This Elisha did that he might fulfill the commandment which the Lord gave to

Elijah, his master, in Horeb, the mount of God, saying, Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel.

Now there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and the man said, I see a company. Then said the king, Send a horseman to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace? So there rode a horseman to meet them. came to them, but he cometh not again; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.

Then said the king, Make ready my chariot. So they made ready his chariot, and he went forth to meet Jehu; and Ahaziah, king of Judah, went with him, for Ahaziah had come down to see him, because



THE BODY OF JEZEBEL EATEN BY DOGS.

And when the man came to them he said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? Turn thee behind me. The watchman said, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. So the king sent a second messenger, and it happened to him as to the first. The watchman said, The messenger he had been sick. So the two kings went forth, each in his own chariot.

Now the place of their meeting was near to the vineyard of Naboth. And when Jehoram met Jehu he said, Is it peace, Jehu? But Jehu answered, What peace can there be, so long as the wickedness of thy mother Jezebel is so great?—for Jezebel ruled the

king, her son. Then Jehoram turned his chariot about, crying out, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.

Then Jehu drew his bow with all his might, and smote Jehoram between the shoulders; and the arrow pierced him to the heart, so that he sank down dead in the chariot. Then said Jehu to Bidkar, his captain, Take up his body, and cast it into the portion of Naboth. Dost thou not remember how, when thou and I rode behind Ahab his father, the Lord laid this sentence upon his house, Surely I have seen the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons; and I will requite thee in this portion, saith the Lord?

Death of Jezebel.

Then Jehu rode into Jezreel. And when he was come thither Jezebel adorned herself, and painted her face—for she knew that her son was dead, and that she must herself die—and as Jehu passed by, she looked out from a window, and cried, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?

Jehu lifted up his face to the window and cried, Who is on my side? Who? And there looked out to him from one window two of the servants of the women's chambers, and from another three. He said to them, Throw her down. And they threw her down; and her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her under the feet of the horses. And when he was come in, he sat down to eat and drink. Afterwards he said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her; for she was a king's daughter.

But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of the hands. When Jehu heard this, he said, Now is fulfilled that which the Lord spoke by the mouth of Elijah, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.

When the Lord would take Elijah up into heaven, he went with Elisha, who ministered unto him, from Gilgal in the land of Ephraim, and he said to him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. But Elisha answered, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went to Bethel.

The Prophet's Mantle.

And the young men of the school of the prophets that was in Bethel said unto Elisha, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thee to-day? Elisha answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

Then Elijah said to him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. But Elisha said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went to Jericho.

And the young men that were of the school of the prophets in Jericho said to Elisha, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thee to-day? And Elisha answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. But Elisha said, As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

And fifty men of the school of the prophets went and stood to view afar off. And they two stood by Jordan.

Then Elijah took his mantle, and rolled it up till it was as a rod, and smote the waters therewith; and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

And when they had gone over, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, when I shall be taken away from thee. Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit rest upon me. Elijah said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: if thou see me taken

from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

And as they still went on and talked, behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a storm into the sky.

ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

When Jehu the son of Nimshi slew Jehoram the son of Ahab, and made an end of all the house of Ahab, he slew also Ahaziah king of Judah, and all his brethren.

Now at this time the royal house of David was brought very low; for, first, Jehoram the father of Ahaziah had slain all his brethren, the sons of King Jehoshaphat; and, next, the Philistines having joined themselves with the Arabians, had slain others of the princes; and, last, many had perished by the hand of Jehu.

When, therefore, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and mother to Ahaziah, heard what Jehu had done, then she slew all that remained of the blood royal, hoping to gain the kingdom for herself.

But Jehosheba, that was sister to Ahaziah, being wife to Jehoiada the high-priest, stole one of the king's sons, Joash by name, from the slaughter. First she hid him and his nurse in a bed-chamber of the palace; but afterwards she hid the boy in the house of God. For six years was he hidden; and Athaliah reigned over the land.

Builds a House for Baal.

Much evil did Athaliah do. She built a house for Baal, taking for it the very stones of the house of God, and putting therein vessels from the Lord's sanctuary.

In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the captains of the mercenaries and of the body-guard, and brought them into the house of the Lord, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them, and showed them the king's son. Also he gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of the land; and they all made a covenant with him. And he said to them, The king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David.

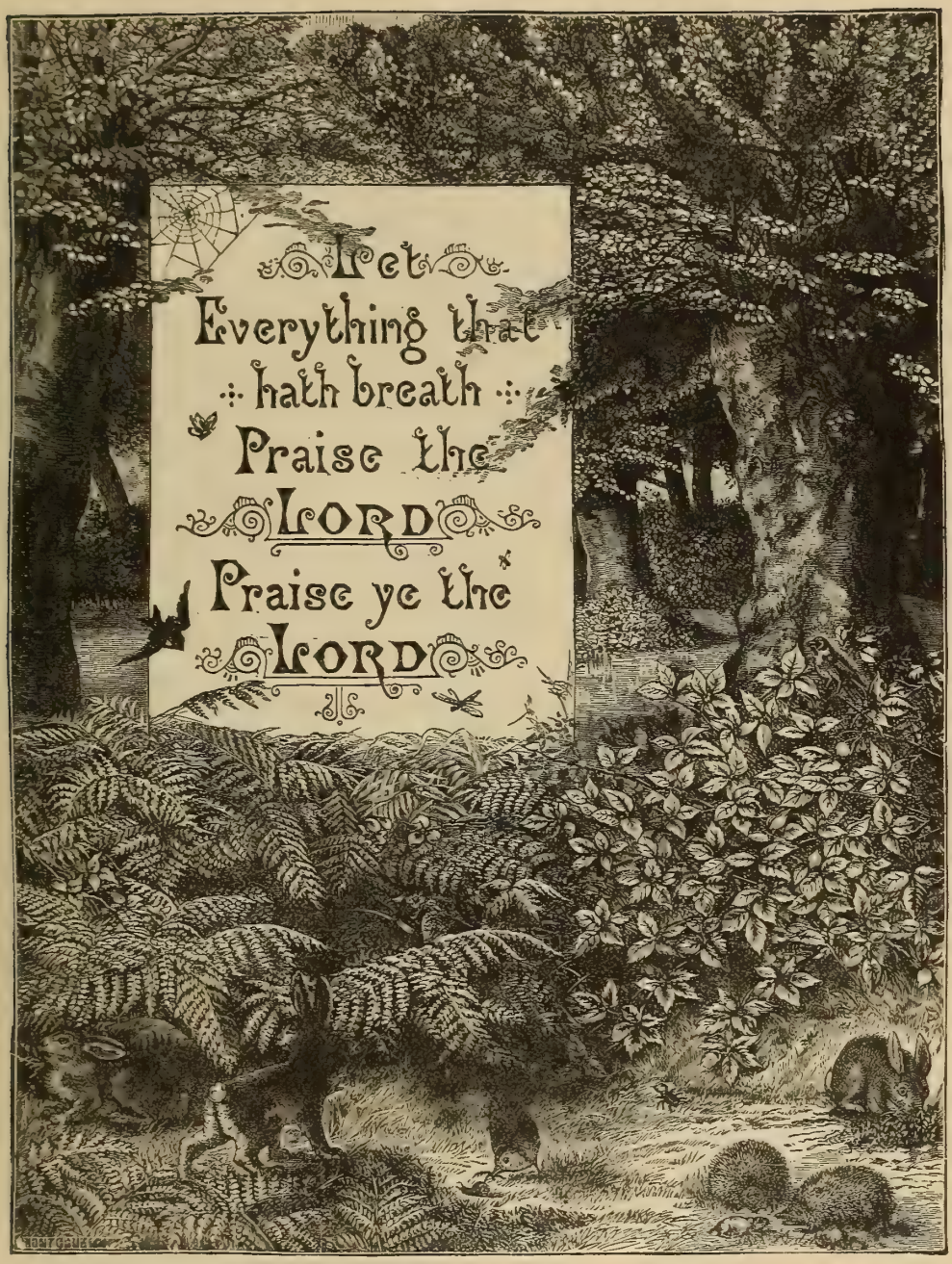
Further, he set one division at the south gate of the temple, and one at the north; and two he brought into the court of the temple, and set them on the right hand of the king and on his left hand. The Levites, he said, shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand, and whosoever else cometh into the temple; but be ye with the king when he goeth out and when he cometh in. And he gave the captains spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been King David's, which were in the Lord's house.

They put the young king on a platform, so that he could be seen of all the people. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him to be king, and put the crown on his head, and the book of the law also, and said, God save the king! And all the people clapped their hands, and shouted.

Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running about and praising the king, she came into the temple of the Lord. And the king stood, as was the custom, upon the pillar, and the princes and the trumpeters stood by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced at the sight, and blew with trumpets. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Conspiracy! Conspiracy!

But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the guard and the officers of the host, saying, Take her out, keeping her between your ranks; and any man that followeth her, slay with the sword. But slay her not within the temple.

So they laid hands on her, and she went by the way by which the horses came into the king's palace. There was she slain. Afterwards the people went into the house of Baal, and broke it down, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altar. So Joash reigned in his father's stead, being seven years old.



THANKSGIVING UNTO THE LORD.

THE PATH OF WISDOM.

CHAPTER XX.

B. C. 891.

THE STORY OF ELISHA—SALT IN THE WATER—WAR AGAINST MOAB—THE PROPHET'S CHAMBER—THE WOMAN OF SHUNEM—RESTORING A DEAD CHILD—A TERRIBLE FAMINE—VESSELS OF OIL—IRON MADE TO SWIM—STORY OF NAAMAN—SIN OF GEHAZI—A YOUNG MAN'S VISION—STONING OF THE HIGH-PRIEST—WHAT HAPPENED IN SYRIA—ELISHA'S LAST WORDS AND DEATH—THE SYRIANS DEFEATED—PARABLE OF THE THISTLE AND CEDAR.

ELISHA took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan. And he wrapped up the mantle as Elijah had wrapped it up, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he had smitten them, they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over.

And when the young men of the school of the prophets which were at Jericho opposite saw what he did, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Then they said unto him, There are with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or in some valley. But he said, Ye shall not send.

And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent, therefore, fifty men, who sought three days, but found him not.

And when they came to him again, for he tarried at Jericho, he said unto them, Did I not say, Go not? The men of the city said unto Elisha, The situation of the city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is bad, and the ground barren. Then he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

The Waters Made Sweet.

Then he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barrenness. And he went from Jericho to Bethel, and from Bethel to Carmel, and from Carmel to Samaria.

Mesha the king of Moab paid year by year to the king of Israel the wool of a hundred thousand lambs and an hundred thousand sheep. But when Ahab was dead he rebelled. Then Jehoram king of Israel, that reigned after Ahaziah his brother, sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me; wilt thou go with me to battle against him?

Jehoshaphat answered, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. And he said, Which way shall we go up? Jehoram said, By the way of the wilderness of Edom.

So these two kings went; and they marched by the south of the Salt Sea. And when they had marched seven days, and the king of Edom had joined himself to them,

they found no water for the host or for the beasts that carried the baggage.

Then Jehoram said, Alas! that the Lord hath called three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab! Jehoshaphat said, Is there not a prophet of the Lord that we may inquire of the Lord by him? One of the king of Israel's servants answered, Elisha the son of Shaphat, that was servant to Elijah, is here. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him.

Music by a Minstrel.

So the three kings went over to inquire of him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and the prophets of thy mother. The king of Israel said, Say not so; for the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hands of Moab.

But Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel.

And when the minstrel played, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of pits. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not feel wind nor see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, and your cattle, and your beasts of burden. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord. He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. Ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and fell every fruitful tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

And in the morning, at sunrise, when the sacrifice is offered, there came water from the hill country of Edom, and the valley was filled with water.

Now the Moabites, when they heard that the three kings were come against them, had gathered all that were able to wear armor, and stood on the north side of the valley. And in the morning early, when the sun shone on the water, the Moabites saw that it was red even as blood. And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain; they have smitten one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote them, so that they fled; and the Israelites went on smiting them even in their own country. They beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land they cast stones, every man a stone; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the fruitful trees. Only Kir-haraseth they could not take, but the slingers went about it and smote it. And when the king of Moab saw that his enemies were too strong for him, he took seven hundred men that drew the sword, to break through their lines to where the king of Edom was encamped; but he could not.

Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned after him, and offered him up for a burnt-offering to his god Chemosh on the wall. And the Israelites were greatly troubled that such a thing should have been done; and they returned to their own land.

The Woman of Shunem.

It fell on a day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a rich woman, who would have him eat bread in her house, and would take no denial.

The woman said to her husband, I perceive that this is a holy man of God which passeth by us continually. Let us build a little chamber out of the wall for him; and put therein a bed and a table and a chair and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh

to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it was so that when he came thither again he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite.

So Gehazi called her, and she stood before him. He said to Gehazi, Say now unto her, Behold now, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?

But the woman answered, I dwell among mine own people. Then Elisha said, What is then to be done for her? Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And Elisha said, Call her. So she came and stood in the door.

Elisha said to her, About this time next year thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

At that time in the year following she had a son.

On a certain day, when the child was grown, he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said to his father, My head, my head! And his father said to the lad that waited on him, Carry him to his mother.

The Child Dies.

So the lad carried the child to his mother; and he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him.

Then she called unto her husband, and said, Send me one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may go to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor sabbath. The beginning of each month was to be kept holy and Elisha held services on Mount Carmel. And she said, Peace; let me go.

Then she said to her servant that went with her, Drive, and go forward; delay me not in my riding, except I bid thee.

So she went, and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When Elisha saw her afar off, he said to Gehazi his servant, That is the Shunammite. Run now to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? She answered, Peace.

And when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet; but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her; and the Lord hath hid the matter from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?

His Eyes See Again.

Then Elisha said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go thy way; if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any man salute thee, answer him not; and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. Then Elisha arose and followed her.

Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Wherefore he returned to meet the prophet, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

And when Elisha was come into the house the child was dead, and laid upon his bed in the prophet's chamber. He went in, therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he lay upon the

child, and put his mouth upon the child's mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; so he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he came down from the chamber, and walked to and fro in the house; and went up to the chamber again, and stretched himself upon the child. And the child sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes.

Then Elisha called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So Gehazi called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground before him, and took up her son and went out.

Seven Years of Famine.

After this Elisha said to the woman, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst; for the Lord will send a famine on this land, and it shall be for seven years. So the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God; and went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

At the end of seven years, she returned out of the land of the Philistines; and went forth to cry to the king for her house and for her land. Now it chanced that at this very time the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. And as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, the very woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer, and said, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day when she left the land, even until now.

There cried a certain woman, that had been wife to one of the prophets, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that he did fear the Lord; and now the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house? She said, Thine handmaid has nothing in the house, save so much oil as one might anoint himself with.

A Debt Paid with Oil.

Then he said, Go borrow thee vessels from all thy neighbors round about; borrow empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and thy sons, and shalt pour out into all the vessels that thou hast borrowed; and when thou hast filled a vessel, thou shalt set it aside.

So she went back to her house, and borrowed vessels as many as she could, and shut the door upon herself and sons. They brought the vessels to her, and she poured out. And when all the vessels were full, she said to her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

Then she came and told the man of God. He said, Go, sell the oil and pay thy debt; and live thou and thy children on the rest.

Again, there was a dearth, and Elisha came to Gilgal; and the young men of the school of the prophets that were there were sitting before him while he taught them. He said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild gourd, and gathered of the fruit his garment full, and came and shred them into the pottage; for they knew not that they were harmful. So they poured out for the men to eat.

And as they were eating of the pottage, one cried out, O man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof. Then Elisha said, Bring meal.

So they brought it, and he cast it into the pot, and said, Pour out for the people that they may eat. They ate and took no harm.

The young men of the school of the prophets that was at Jericho said to Elisha, The place where we dwell is too narrow for us. Let us go unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place where we may dwell. Elisha answered, Go ye.

One of the young men said, Consent to go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan they cut down the wood. And as one was lopping a beam, the iron of the axe fell into the water, and the man cried out, Alas, master for it was borrowed. The man of God said, Where fell it?

And when the man showed him the place, he cut down a stick and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim. Then he said to the man, Take it up to thee. And the man put out his hand and took it.

Naaman, captain of the host of the king of

ELISHA CAUSING IRON TO SWIM.

Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor; but he was a leper.

The Little Maid.

Now the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captives from the land of Israel; among these was a little maid, who waited upon Naaman's wife.

The maid said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would heal him of his leprosy. And Naaman heard it, and told his master the king what the maid from the land of Israel had said.

Then said the king, Go, depart; and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. So Naaman departed, taking with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel.

The letter was written in this fashion: Behold, I have sent herewith Naaman my servant that thou mayest heal him of his leprosy.

And when the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man doth send unto me to heal a man of his leprosy? Wherefore see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes he sent to the king, saying, Why hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

So Naaman came with his chariot and with all his company, and halted at the door of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Naaman was angry, and said, I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and pass his hand over the place and heal the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?

So he turned and went away in a rage His servants came near and spoke unto him saying, My father, if the prophet had bidden thee to do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, shouldest thou do it when he saith, Wash, and be clean?

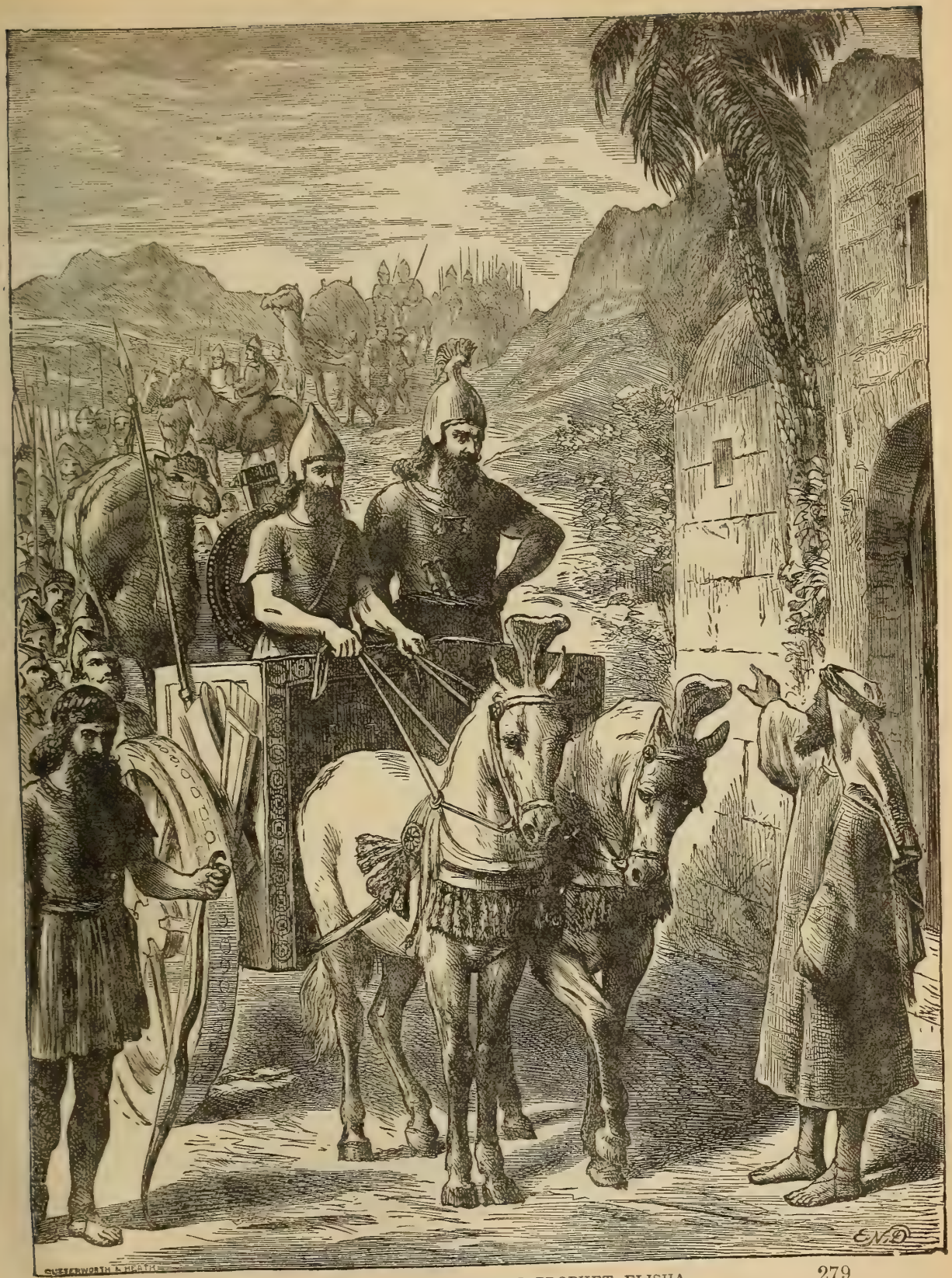
Then he went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him. And he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. Now, therefore, I pray thee, take a present from thy servant.

Gehazi Becomes a Leper.

But Elisha said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And Naaman urged him to take it, but he refused.

Then Naaman said, Wilt thou give to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but only unto the Lord. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow myself in the house, the Lord pardon thy servant. Elisha said unto him, Go in peace.

So he departed; but when he had gone a little way, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, said to himself, My master hath spared Naaman



NAAMAN AT THE DOOR OF THE PROPHET ELISHA.

this Syrian in not receiving at his hands the present which he brought; but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him and take somewhat of him.

So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from his chariot to meet him, and said, Is all peace? Gehazi said, All is peace. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men from the school of prophets; give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver and two changes of raiment.

Naaman said to him, Be content; take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of raiment, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before Gehazi.

When he came to the hill he took the gifts from the hands of the servants and hid them in the house, and went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? Gehazi answered, Thy servant went no whither.

Elisha said to him, Went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is this a time to receive silver, and garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave to thee and to thy race for ever. And the man went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Elisha and the Syrians.

The king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place we will pitch our camp. And Elisha, the man of God, sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

And the king of Israel avoided the place concerning which the man of God had warned him. And this happened not once nor twice only, but many times.

Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing. And he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us helpeth the king of Israel?

And one of his servants said, There is no one, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in the secret place of thy bedchamber. The king said, Go, spy out where he is, that I may send and fetch him. It was told the king, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. So the king sent thither horses and chariots and a great host; and they came by night and encompassed the city.

A Strange Sight.

And when the servant of the man of God had risen early and gone forth from the house, a host encompassed the city, having with it horses and footmen. And the servant said unto him, Alas, my master, what shall we do?

Elisha answered him, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open this young man's eyes, that he may see.

And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. When the Syrians came down from the hills to besiege the city, Elisha prayed again unto the Lord, saying, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness.

So the Lord smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha. And Elisha said, This is not the way, neither is

ELISHA WITNESSING THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.

this the city. Come ye after me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek.

But he led them to Samaria; and when they were come to Samaria he prayed again, Lord open the eyes of these men that they may see. And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and they were in the midst of Samaria.

When the king of Israel saw them he said, My father, shall I smite them till I destroy them. Elisha answered, Thou shalt not smite them. Smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy own sword and thy own bow. Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink and go back to their master.

So the king made a great feast for them; and when they had eaten and drunk he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

THE STONING OF ZECHARIAH.

In the days of Elisha, when Joash was king of Judah, Zechariah, a good man, was high-priest. He saw the idolatry of the people and prophesied against them, saying, Why transgress ye the commandments of the

Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.

This so displeased the king that he commanded Zechariah to be stoned to death. The high-priest's father, Jehoiada, had shown kindness to the king, but this did not prevent the king from slaying the high-priest. Afterward the king's servants conspired against him for the blood he had shed, and slew him on his bed. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

Elisha went to Damascus. At that time Ben-hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. Then Ben-hadad said to Hazael, who was one of his officers, Take a present in thy hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him whether I shall recover of this disease.

Becomes King of Syria.

So Hazael went to meet the prophet, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before Elisha, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

And Elisha said unto him, Go, say to the king, if thou wilt, that he shall certainly live; nevertheless the Lord hath showed me that he will certainly die. And when he had said this, he looked steadfastly at Hazael, till the man was ashamed. And Elisha wept.

Hazael said, Why weepest thou? Elisha answered, I weep, because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds thou shalt burn with fire, and slay the people.

Hazael said, But what is thy servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing? Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

So Hazael departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? Hazael answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.

But on the morrow, Hazael took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on the sick man's face, so that he died. And Hazael reigned in his stead.

Again Elisha called a certain young man of the school of the prophets, and said to him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-in-Gilead. And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him rise up from where he sitteth with the other captains, and take him to a private chamber; then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door and flee, and tarry not. And the young man did so.

Thus Jehu rebelled against Jehoram the son of Ahab, and rode to Jezreel; and when Jehoram came out to meet him, he slew him, and reigned over Israel in his stead.

Last Words of Elisha.

Elisha was fallen sick of the sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept before him, saying, O my father, my father! The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!

Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. So the king took unto him a bow and arrows.

Then the prophet said, Put now thine hand upon the bow. And the king did so. And Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. So the king opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And the king shot.

DEFEAT OF THE SYRIANS BY THE ISRAELITES

And Elisha said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou have consumed them.

Then Elisha said, Take the arrows. And the king took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground; and the king smote upon the ground thrice, and stayed.

The man of God was angry with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten upon the ground five or six times. Then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice. So Elisha died, being full of years.

Victory over the Syrians.

But Hazel king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

So Hazel king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazel the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Jehoash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

In the second year of Jehoash king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did. Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

As soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, he slew his servants which had slain the king his father. But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

Parable of the Thistle and Cedar.

Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?

But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up: and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.

And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

CLEANSED FROM UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE SUN AND SHIELD.

CHAPTER XXI.

B. C. 862–698.

TWO PROPHETS AND A KING—JONAH SENT TO NINEVEH—A PROPHET CAST INTO THE SEA—THE GREAT FISH—A GOOD KING IN JUDAH—THE TEMPLE PURIFIED—A ROYAL FEAST—THE SICKNESS OF HEZEKIAH—BABYLON AND ASSYRIA—MESSAGE FROM THE ASSYRIAN KING—ISAIAH GIVES COURAGE TO THE JEWS—A WONDERFUL VISION.

AFTER the death of Elisha, his prophecy was fulfilled. Jehoash was victorious over the Syrians three times, but as the prophet also said, he could not wholly subdue them. Jehoash reigned sixteen years, and he died and was buried in Samaria; and Jeroboam, his son, reigned in his stead. The people of Israel had been hard pressed by their enemies, and were in great trouble, and in need of help.

So God was good to them, and gave Jeroboam strength to overcome the Syrians, and to take from them two of their cities, Damascus and Hamah. Yet the people did not thank God, or repent of their sins, but kept on worshipping the two golden calves, and increasing in wickedness.

Then the Lord sent a prophet named Amos to warn them. And when Amos came he told the children of Israel that there was no other people on the earth whom God loved as well as he did them. They were his chosen ones. But they had loved evil and not good. They had been cruel to the poor, had robbed and cheated one another, and been guilty of many crimes. God had already punished them in the past with plagues of all sorts, hoping they would turn to him and repent, and he would forgive them.

Then Amaziah, who was the chief priest at Bethel in the temple of Baal, sent to Jeroboam, saying Amos is speaking against thee to the children of Israel. For he says, Jeroboam shall be slain, and the people of Israel taken captive.

What the Herdsman Said.

And Amaziah said to Amos, O thou seer, go away into the land of Judah, and prophesy there. But prophesy no more in the place where King Jeroboam comes to worship.

Then Amos said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. And the Lord came to me and said, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. Therefore, Amaziah, hear thou the word of the Lord. Thou sayest, Prophesy not against the people of Israel; but thus saith the Lord, Thy wife shall go away and leave thee; thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword; and thou shalt die in a polluted land.

The prophets Hosea and Joel also spoke to the people of Israel, in the days of King Jeroboam, and told them of the punishment in store for them, if they did not repent of their sins and give their hearts to God. Yet they would not listen to these good men, nor give up the worship of the golden calves.

And Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, when he died, and Zachariah, his son, was made king in his stead.

One of the prophets in the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel, was Jonah. He was sent by God with a message to the people of Ninevah. Ninevah was the capital of Assyria; it was a very large place, and its wickedness was very great.

The errand upon which God sent Jonah was to cry against this city because of its sins, and to say to the people, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

Now Jonah did not like to go on such an errand. He may have thought that the people would ill-treat him, perhaps kill him, if he came with such evil tidings. At all events, he made up his mind that he would not go to Nineveh, but as there was a ship just going to sail quite a different way, he said he would go into that ship, and so get away from the presence of the Lord.

A Furious Tempest.

Jonah found that he only ran into difficulty when he ran away from God. The Lord sent a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the sailors were afraid, and every man cried to his idol god, for they were heathens. Now they cast out the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. Where was Jonah? Fast asleep in the cabin. The captain came to him, and said, What do you mean by sleeping now? Arise, call upon your God, perhaps your God can save us.

The sailors thought that perhaps this tempest came because of some hidden sin of one of their number. So they cast lots to try to find out the sinner. God directed the lot, and it fell upon Jonah.

Then they said to him, Who are you? Of what land are you a native? What have you done to cause this storm?

Jonah, in his fear of God's anger, was not afraid of men now, but he boldly said, I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven, who made both the sea and the dry land. I am now running away from some work that he gave me to do.

The men at this were more afraid; they knew that the storm was not a natural one but sent by God for a special reason. Why did you act so? they said. What shall we do to you to make the sea calmer? for the sea now was quite furious.

They Throw Him Overboard.

Throw me overboard, said Jonah; then the sea will be calm to you: for I know that for my sake is this great tempest sent. The men did not like to do this; they rowed very hard to bring the ship to land; but they could not; the raging of the waves increased every moment.

Then these heathen men were so awe-struck with the greatness of the Lord God, that they cried unto him, and said, O Lord, thou knowest that it is not our wish to destroy this man, so do not punish us for casting him into the water; the storm came as it pleased thee.

Then they threw Jonah into the sea; and the sea was calm and still at once. We are told that they feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto him, and made vows, or promises, to him.

But what became of Jonah? Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah: and he was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. He now began to think how foolish and wicked he had been, and he prayed to God even in that dreadful place. God heard his prayer, and the Lord spoke to the fish; so it went to the shore,

and threw up Jonah in safety upon dry land.

Now Jonah again heard God bid him go to Nineveh to deliver his message, and this time he went.

Did the people ill-treat him when they heard him say that their city would be destroyed? No; they believed the message, and said, Let every man fast, and wear sackcloth, and mourn; and let every man cry earnestly to God to turn away his anger from us, and let every man give up his evil ways which have brought this anger upon us. Who can tell if God will hear us and forgive us, so that we do not perish?

So every one mourned; even the king on the throne laid aside his robes, and covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. The merciful God saw that they turned from their evil ways, and humbled themselves before him, so he said that now he would spare their city.

Jonah should have been glad at this happy ending of his painful errand. Instead of that he complained to God, and said, People will take me for a false prophet now that you have not let my prophecy come true. I had better die. God corrected this foolish, ill-tempered man.

JONAH SHELTERED BY THE VINE.

While Jonah was watching the city, God bade a gourd grow up quickly to shelter him, and Jonah was very glad of its shade. But God prepared a worm to destroy the gourd in a night, so the next morning Jonah fainted from the heat, and then he grumbled because the gourd was gone. Then God said, You had pity on the gourd which came up in a night and perished in a night, why should I not spare that great city, Nineveh, with its

large number of children and its innocent cattle? You fret at the loss of a worthless gourd, and you fret because I do not destroy a great city. You should rejoice in my mercy.

We now come to the story of Hezekiah who reigned in Judah. He was the son of King Ahaz. Now Ahaz had done very wickedly in the sight of the Lord. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, according to the abominations of the heathen. He made one of his sons to pass through the fire to Molech; and he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. And in the great court of the temple he set up an altar after the pattern of one that he had seen in Damascus; and the brazen altar of sacrifice he put down from its place; and he cut off the ornaments from the bases of the laver which Hiram had made for Solomon; and he took down the molten sea from the brazen oxen whereon it stood, and put it on a pavement of stone.

THE MOLTEN SEA.

Also the covered seat of the king, whereon he sat, when he came into the house of the Lord, did he take, to give it to the king of Assyria. And he broke in pieces the vessels of the house, and shut the doors of the house, so that the priests could not minister therein, nor offer the sacrifice morning and evening as the law commanded.

Then Micah the Morasthite stood up, and prophesied against the land, saying to the people, Zion for your sake shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

But Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David did.

In the first year of his reign, in the first month of the year, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, which his father had shut, and repaired them. And he brought the priests and the Levites into the eastern court, and said to them, Hear me, ye Levites; sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth all the uncleanness out of the Holy Place. For our fathers have trespassed, and have done that which was evil in the sight of the Lord our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away

HEZEKIAH CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

their faces from the house of the Lord, and have shut up the doors, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense, nor offered offerings therein.

Therefore is the Lord wroth with us. Our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn from us. My sons, be not negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, and to serve him.

Then the Levites cleansed the outer court, and the priests the Holy Place; all the uncleanness that was therein they brought out; and the Levites carried it to the brook Kidron. On the first day of the first month they began to sanctify. Eight days were they in purifying the courts, and eight days in purifying the temple. On the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

They Sound the Trumpets.

Then they went to King Hezekiah, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the Lord, and the altar, and the table of the shewbread, and all the vessels.

The next day they offered sacrifices; and when the burnt offering began, then the trumpets sounded, and all the instruments of music which David had commanded. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpets sounded, till the burnt offering was finished.

Also King Hezekiah and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord, using the words of David, and of Asaph the seer.

In the second month of the year Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel. For they could not keep it at the due time, because the house was not sanctified, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

This proclamation was made from Dan to Beer-sheba, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he will return unto the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. Be not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn from you.

Crowds at the Feast.

So the posts passed from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun; but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. And in Judah the people were of one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes; so that there assembled much people in Jerusalem to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month.

When Hezekiah had been king in Jerusalem for fourteen years he was sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him, and said to him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.

Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept.

And before Isaiah had gone out into the

middle court of the palace, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah, the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city

THE LIPS OF ISAIAH TOUCHED WITH A COAL FROM THE ALTAR.

out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs and lay it on the boil. And he was soon well again.

Berodach-baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

Hezekiah received the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, and showed them his treasure-house, the silver, and the gold, and the precious ointments that he had, and his armory, and all that was found in his treasures; there was nothing in his house, or in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

Then came Isaiah the prophet and said to Hezekiah, What said these men? And whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

Then Isaiah said, What have they seen in thy house? Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen; there is nothing in my treasures that I have not shown them.

Then Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord, Behold, the days come when all that is in thy house, and that which

thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried away unto Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And some of thy posterity shall they take away, and they shall serve in the palace of the king of Babylon.

And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which he hath spoken. Is it not good if there be peace and prosperity in the days?

The Assyrians.

In the fourth year of Hezekiah king of Judah, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. For three years did the Assyrians besiege it; and in the sixth year of Hezekiah they took it, Sargon being then their king.

All the days of Sargon, Hezekiah paid tribute to him, though the king of Babylon, when he sent ambassadors to him after his sickness, had well-nigh persuaded him to rebel. But when Sargon was dead, having been murdered in the royal city that he had built for himself, and Sennacherib his son reigned in his stead, then Hezekiah rebelled against him, refusing to pay tribute any longer.

Then Sennacherib came up against the land Judah, and all the fenced cities, till Jerusalem was left alone. Then Hezekiah strengthened the walls, building it up where it was broken, and made darts and shields in abundance, and set captains over the people, and encouraged them, bidding them to be strong and courageous, For, said he, there are more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. Also he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men, to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city.

Nevertheless, when the king of Assyria threw up a mound against Jerusalem, and shut it in on every side, Hezekiah repented him of what he had done. His ministers also counselled submission, though Isaiah the prophet would have had him trust in the Lord. Therefore he sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish—for he had gone to Lachish, leaving his army at Jerusalem—saying, I have offended; take away thy host from before the city; that which thou puttest on me I will bear.

Then the king of Assyria put upon Hezekiah a tribute of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did he cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which he had himself overlaid, that he might pay the tribute which the king of Assyria had put upon him.

Jerusalem Besieged.

When Sennacherib had taken Lachish, he heard that Tirhakah the Ethiopian was coming up against him with a great army from Egypt; therefore he sent to Hezekiah demanding of him that he should give up Jerusalem into his hands. The captain of his host, and the chief chamberlain, and another of the chief captains, did he send to King Hezekiah, and a great company of soldiers with them.

Then these three ambassadors of Sennacherib stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field, and called to Hezekiah to come out to them.

The king sent Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to hear the message which they brought.

Then the second of the captains spake thus to them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest (but they are but vain words), I have counsel and strength for the war. Now, on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Behold, thou trustest on the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

The King of Assyria.

Now, therefore, give hostages to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. But if thou canst not, then how wilt thou drive away even one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? Nay; but the Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Then said Eliakim and his fellows to the messenger of the king of Assyria, Speak to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language, so that the people on the wall can hear.

But he answered, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? Hath he not sent me to the men that sit on the wall, whom ye will cause to die of hunger and of thirst with you.

Then he turned and cried to the people with a loud voice in the Jews' language, saying, Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you out of my hand. Neither let him make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us; and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

Hearken not to Hezekiah, but hearken to the words of the great king: Make peace with me, and come out to me from behind your walls, and then eat every man of his own vine and his own fig-tree, and drink the waters of his own cistern; till I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live and not die; and hearken not to Hezekiah when he would persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us.

But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, Answer him not.

Then Eliakim and Shebna and Joah came to Hezekiah, with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Assyrians.

"Be not Afraid."

And when Hezekiah heard them he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim and Shebna and the elders of the priests to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This is a day of trouble, and chastisement, and reproach: for we are come to extremity, and there is none to help. It may be that the Lord thy God will hear all the words of the captain whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God: and will punish him for the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

Isaiah said to them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard,

with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a new spirit, even a spirit of fear, in him, and he shall hear evil tidings, and he shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Then the messengers of Sennacherib returned to their master, and found him warring against Libnah. Then, because he heard that Tirhakah was near at hand, he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

These words did Sennacherib write in a letter, and sent it by the hands of his messengers to Hezekiah. And Hezekiah received it from them, and read it; and he went up into the house of the Lord, and he spread the letter before the Lord.

THE VISION OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

And he prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim, Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord, bow

down thine ear, and hear: open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words wherewith Sennacherib hath reproached the living God. Of a truth, the kings have destroyed the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore have the kings of Assyria destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.

An Angel Smites the Assyrians.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

And that night the Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they that were left arose early in the morning, behold, all their comrades were dead men.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and returned to Nineveh, and dwelt there.

And as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the edge of the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia.

And Isaiah had a vision of the Lord in his glory. He saw the Child whose name was Wonderful and the wise men of the East bringing their gifts and bowing down before him. He saw the Son of Man bearing his cross, and then his triumph over his enemies. The dragon of sin was slain, and on earth there was peace and good will.

CHAPTER XXII.

B. C. 605.

THE STORY OF DANIEL—CAPTIVITY OF THE JEWS—THREE HEBREW YOUTHS—THE KING'S GREAT IMAGE—THE FIERY FURNACE—HANDWRITING ON THE WALL—WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING—DANIEL'S ENEMIES—IN THE DEN OF LIONS—A REMARKABLE VISION.

THE Israelites were divided into two kingdoms. Those who always had one of David's family for their king were called Jews, and only the other part of the nation were called Israelites. Both the Jews and the Israelites were constantly disobeying God and turning away from him. We must not write these histories otherwise than as they are in the Bible, and after all it would never do to suppose that there are only good people in the world. Both the Jews and the Israelites did many bad things. Again and again they built altars to worship false gods.

At last that thing happened to them which Moses had long ago told them would happen if they persisted in disobeying God. Their enemies came and destroyed their towns, and threw down their houses, and carried the people away into a strange land. This happened first to the Israelites, and they have never yet come back again to their own land.

Capture of Jerusalem.

Afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his soldiers. They broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and took it, and killed great numbers of the people. They also pulled down the beautiful temple, and carried off all the gold and the silver and the precious things that were found in it.

All the people who were not killed were carried away captives to Babylon. The wicked king who was then reigning in Jerusalem was also taken prisoner; and Nebuchadnezzar chained him with iron chains, and put him into a prison in Babylon. But the costly vessels of gold and silver that he had taken out of the temple, these Nebuchadnezzar brought into the house of his god.

The land that God had given to his people was now waste and desolate, with its towns all destroyed, and hardly any people left in it. And the Jews were told by their prophets that they must live in Babylon for seventy years.

When Nebuchadnezzar was come to Babylon with all these captives, he desired one of his officers to choose from among them a certain number of youths who were handsome and clever, and who were already good scholars, that they might be trained for three years in the king's palace, and learn everything that the wisest men in Babylon could teach them.

At the end of the three years the king meant to have these young men brought into his presence, that they might be always near him, to tell him anything he wanted to know.

The king ordered that these youths should be fed with the same food and wine that were

served at his own table. This food and wine were of the best and costliest kind, you may be sure; but before being placed on the king's table, a portion of the food was offered to his false gods, and every one who ate of it was considered to be thanking those gods for his food and drink.

There was one of those Jewish youths who resolved that he would not sin against God by eating the king's meat, for which the idols had been thanked. This young man's name was Daniel. He therefore asked the officer who took care of them not to give him and his three companions any of the king's meat and wine.

This officer liked Daniel, and he wished

THE JEWS LED INTO CAPTIVITY.

to please him; but he was afraid of the king. He said that if the king saw the youths who were under his care looking thin and poorly fed, he would be angry with him, and perhaps order his head to be cut off; for those kings of Babylon thought very little of cutting off the heads of people who displeased them.

Thrived on Pulse and Water.

Daniel said, Try us for ten days: during that time give us nothing but pulse and water; then judge if we look any worse than those who have been eating the king's meat. After that, do as you think best about it.

The officer consented, and at the end of the ten days these four young men were fairer and fatter than those who had been fed from the king's table. After that they were not asked to eat any more of the king's meat, but every day they got pulse and water.

Pulse means such things as dried beans or peas—not a very nice kind of food, and people would get very tired of it if they never ate anything else, especially when there were all sorts of dainties to be had for the asking.

It is better, however, to eat coarse food than to disobey God. These Jewish youths knew that; and God gave them better things than the dainties they had refused for his sake. He gave them wisdom and knowledge, and great skill in learning those things which they were taught.

At the end of the three years, when they were brought before the king, he found them wiser than all their teachers. Not only had they learned all that the wise men of Babylon could teach them, but God himself had taught them. God made Daniel his prophet, and showed him many things that were to happen at a future time.

One night King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which troubled him. He felt sure that it had a meaning, and he sent for the wise men of Babylon to tell him what the meaning of the dream was. They said, O king, tell your servants the dream, and we will tell you the meaning of it.

Nebuchadnezzar answered, I have forgotten it; therefore you must tell me the dream and the meaning too. If you tell me what the dream was, then I shall believe that you know the meaning, and I will give you rewards and great honor. If you cannot tell me the dream, I don't believe you can tell the meaning of it; you are only liars who pretend to know what is going to happen, and you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be thrown down.

The wise men answered, There is no one in the world who could tell what you ask; only the gods could answer such a question. No king ever before required his wise men to tell him anything like that. Nebuchadnezzar was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men in Babylon should be put to death.

He Knew the Secret.

Some of the king's guards were sent to take Daniel and his companions, that they too might be put to death. But Daniel said that if the king would give him a little time, he would tell him all he wanted to know. The king consented to this; and Daniel and his three companions prayed to God to show them this secret, so that they might not all be destroyed.

That night God showed his prophet Daniel the king's dream and the meaning of it. Daniel thanked God and praised him. Then he asked to be brought before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar asked him, Are you able to tell me the dream that I had, and the meaning of it? Daniel answered, There is

a God in heaven who knows everything, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar by a dream what is going to happen in the world.

Then he told the king what he had seen in his dream. When he came to tell the meaning of it, it was all about things that should happen in the world years and years after the people then living had passed away.

When Nebuchadnezzar had heard Daniel tell the dream and its wonderful meaning, he said, Truly your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and One who knows all secrets. He has shown you this secret. The king gave Daniel great gifts, and made him ruler over the affairs of Babylon, and head of all the wise men.

Would Not Serve False Gods.

Daniel's three companions were also made great men. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. You shall now hear something that happened to them.

Nebuchadnezzar made a great image of gold, and set it up in a plain near Babylon. He called together all the great men of his kingdom to the place where the golden image was set up. There a man read to them in a loud voice the order that the king had given. It was this: Unto you it is commanded, O people, that as soon as you hear a band playing upon all kinds of instruments of music, you shall all at that moment fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship it shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar's lords and great men, when they heard the band of music, fell down and worshipped, as the king had commanded—all except those Jews who would worship God only.

Then some people came to Nebuchadnezzar and said, O king, there are certain Jews whom you have made rulers over your affairs—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men have not obeyed you. They do not serve your gods, nor worship your golden image.

Nebuchadnezzar, in a great rage, sent for those men, and asked them if what he had heard of them was true. And he said, If you will not obey me, you shall be thrown into a burning fiery furnace; and what God is there who can save you out of that?

They answered, O Nebuchadnezzar, our God whom we serve is able to save us out of the furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, yet we will not serve your gods, nor worship your golden image.

Cast into the Fiery Furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was very furious, for people rarely dared to speak to him in this way. He commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than usual, and that those three men should be cast into it.

The strongest soldiers in the king's army bound Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and threw them into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. The flame was so fierce that the soldiers were killed by the great heat. But God's servants were not killed, nor hurt at all, though they had been cast into the midst of it.

After they had been thrown in, the king rose up frightened and astonished, and he said, Did we not cast three men bound into the furnace? But now I see four men, loose and unhurt, walking in the midst of the furnace, and the fourth man is grand and beautiful like a god.

Going to the door of the burning fiery furnace, he cried out, Shadrach, Meshach,

and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come here!

Then those three men came out from the midst of the fire, and the king and all his lords saw that they had not been hurt; there was not a hair of their heads singed, and their clothes were not scorched.

And Nebuchadnezzar said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; for he has sent his angel, and saved his servants who trusted in him, and who gave their bodies to be burned, rather than worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a law, that if any one speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that man shall be cut in pieces, and his house shall be pulled down; for there is no other God that can save like this.

After this the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego greater honors than they had before enjoyed.

Some time after Nebuchadnezzar was dead his grandson Belshazzar was king of Babylon. Though Nebuchadnezzar had learned before he died that all the earth belongs to God, and that there is nothing so good as to serve and obey him, and all the people in Babylon had heard how God had taught him that lesson, yet Belshazzar cared nothing at all about the matter. Indeed, he cared very little for anything, except eating and drinking and making merry.

DANIEL REFUSING TO WORSHIP THE IMAGE.

He was not even a good soldier, as Nebuchadnezzar had been; and when a great army of his enemies surrounded Babylon, and were trying with all their might to get into it, he went on feasting more than ever, for he said no enemy could ever break into the great city of Babylon, whose walls were so high and strong.

Fire on the Wall.

One night, when he had made a feast for his lords and his princes, he sent for those vessels of gold and silver that had been holy vessels in God's temple at Jerusalem.

When these had been brought, the wicked Belshazzar and all his gay lords and ladies drank wine out of them; and as they drank they praised their idols that were made of gold and of silver, and of brass and wood and stone.

In the midst of this wicked feasting Belshazzar's face grew pale, and he trembled with fear; for on the wall opposite him he saw fingers writing some strange mysterious words of which he knew not the meaning.

Then he cried aloud to his lords to bring in the wise men of Babylon, that they might tell him what those terrible words meant. Whoever reads them, said he, shall be dressed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and be made the third ruler in the kingdom. The wise men came, but they could not read the writing on the wall, nor tell at all what it meant; and the king and all his lords were more terrified than ever, and cared nothing now for their feasting.

Then the queen said, O king, let not this trouble you. There is a man in your kingdom who can read the words—a man in whom was found such wisdom and knowledge that Nebuchadnezzar, your grandfather, made him ruler over all the wise men in Babylon. Let him be called.

Daniel was therefore brought in, and the king told him that if he could read that writing, and tell the meaning of it, then he should be clothed in scarlet, and have a gold chain about his neck, and be the third ruler in Babylon.

Daniel Tells the Meaning.

Daniel answered, Let your gifts remain with you, and give your rewards to another. Yet I will read what is written, and tell you the meaning of it.

O king, the most high God made Nebuchadnezzar a very great king, and gave him power over many people; but he taught him to know that God rules all kingdoms, and sets whom he pleases over them. And you, O Belshazzar, though you knew all that happened to your grandfather, and all that God taught him, you have not humbled your heart, but have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house to your feast, and you have drunk wine out of them. And you have praised your gods of silver and gold, and brass and iron, and wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand your life is you have not worshipped. Therefore he sent this hand which wrote the words that you have seen.

Daniel then read those strange and terrible words, and said, The meaning of the words is this: God has brought your kingdom to an end. You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting. God has divided your kingdom, and given it to your enemies.

When Daniel had said this the king made his lords clothe him in scarlet and put a golden chain on his neck, and declare that he was the third greatest man in the kingdom.

That night the enemy's army got into the strong proud city, and Belshazzar was killed, and a king called Darius took the kingdom

DANIEL INTERPRETING THE KING'S DREAM.

of Babylon for his own. King Darius soon found out that Daniel was the wisest and best man in his kingdom, and he made much of him accordingly. When he set princes over the different parts of his great kingdom, he gave Daniel authority over them all.

Those princes envied Daniel, and tried to find some fault in him, that they might complain of him to the king. But they could find none; and they said to one another, We shall not find anything to say against Daniel, unless it be something about worshipping his God.

They knew that Daniel prayed to God three times every day. He used to kneel down in his chamber with his face turned towards Jerusalem; for though it was many, many miles away, and he had not seen it since he was very young, he knew that God had promised to bring the Jews back again to their old home at the end of seventy years, and it comforted him to say his prayers looking towards the place where God's house had been.

A Plot Against Daniel.

Daniel's enemies therefore made this plan to get him into trouble: they asked King Darius to make a law that for thirty days no one in the kingdom should make prayer to any God or man except to the king; and that if any one should ask anything from any other god or man, he should be thrown into the den of lions.

Darius was foolish enough to consent to this law. When he had signed it and sealed it he could not alter it for any one; for it was a rule with these people that when the king made a law it could not be altered.

Daniel, however, prayed to God just the same as before. As he did so his enemies saw him kneeling in his chamber with the windows open that looked towards Jerusalem; and they told the king, and said, Daniel, who is one of these captive Jews, does not obey you, O king. He does not mind the law that you have made. He prays to his God three times every day.

When the king heard this he was very sorry for having made that law. He loved Daniel greatly; he was so wise and useful, and so faithful to him.

Thrown to the Lions.

All that day he tried to find some way of saving him; but the princes reminded him that he could not alter a law which he had made. Then he commanded that Daniel should be thrown into the den of lions, and he said to him, Your God whom you serve continually will save you.

Daniel was therefore thrown in among the fierce lions, and a great stone was laid on the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own seal, which might not be broken without his leave.

Then King Darius returned to his palace. But he ate no food that evening, neither would he have any music played for him, nor could he fall asleep all that night.

Early in the morning he went to the mouth of the lions' den, and called to Daniel; and his voice was sad as he called, for he feared that Daniel was not alive to answer. He said, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to save you from the lions?

Daniel replied from within the den, O king, live for ever. My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; for he knows I have not sinned, neither have I done any wrong to you, O king.

Darius was glad, and commanded them to take Daniel out of the den. No hurt was found upon him, for God in whom he

DANIEL TOUCHED BY THE ANGEL.

trusted had taken care of him. Then the king commanded that the men who had plotted against Daniel should be thrown into the den.

Those kings of Babylon were fierce and cruel; and though Darius was not so bad as many, yet he was not satisfied to punish the offenders only, as all kings should, but he ordered their families also to be thrown to the lions. The lions sprang upon them and tore them in pieces, and devoured them, before they reached the bottom of the den.

Then King Darius wrote a letter and sent it to all the countries that he ruled over. And this was in the letter that he wrote:

I make a law, That in every part of my kingdom men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and remains for ever. His kingdom shall not be destroyed, and he shall rule for ever. He delivers and saves; he works signs and wonders in the earth; and he has saved Daniel from the strength of the lions.

After that Daniel prospered during all the days of Darius, and also in the days of the king who came after him.

Daniel's Vision.

The king who reigned after Darius sent many of the Jews back to their own land, and bade them build again the temple of God at Jerusalem. He gave them back those vessels of silver and gold that had been taken out of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

After this Daniel had a vision. He was by the side of the great river Hidde-kel, when he lifted up his eyes and saw a certain man clothed in linen whose loins were girded with fine gold. His body was like beryl, and his face had the appearance of lightning; his eyes were as lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like in color to polished brass, and his voice was like the voice of a multitude.

Daniel alone saw the vision, but a great quaking came upon the men that were with him, and they fled to hide themselves. His strength forsook him, and his comeliness was turned into corruption. At the sound of the voice he fell into a deep sleep.

Then a hand touched him. The voice told him that he was greatly beloved, and he was to stand upright and hear the message that was brought to him. While he stood trembling the voice told him to fear not, and that now he was to understand what would befall his people in the latter days. He set his face toward the ground and became dumb. And one like the sons of men touched his lips. Now he spoke and said he had no strength remaining in him.

Then there came again and touched him one like the appearance of a man, strengthened him and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. At this Daniel was strengthened and said, Let my lord speak. Then said he, I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth.

What Shall Come to Pass.

Then said Daniel, I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor accord-

ing to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion. And in the end of years they shall join themselves together: for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

A Great Army.

But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: and shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strenghened by it. For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south; also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities; and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

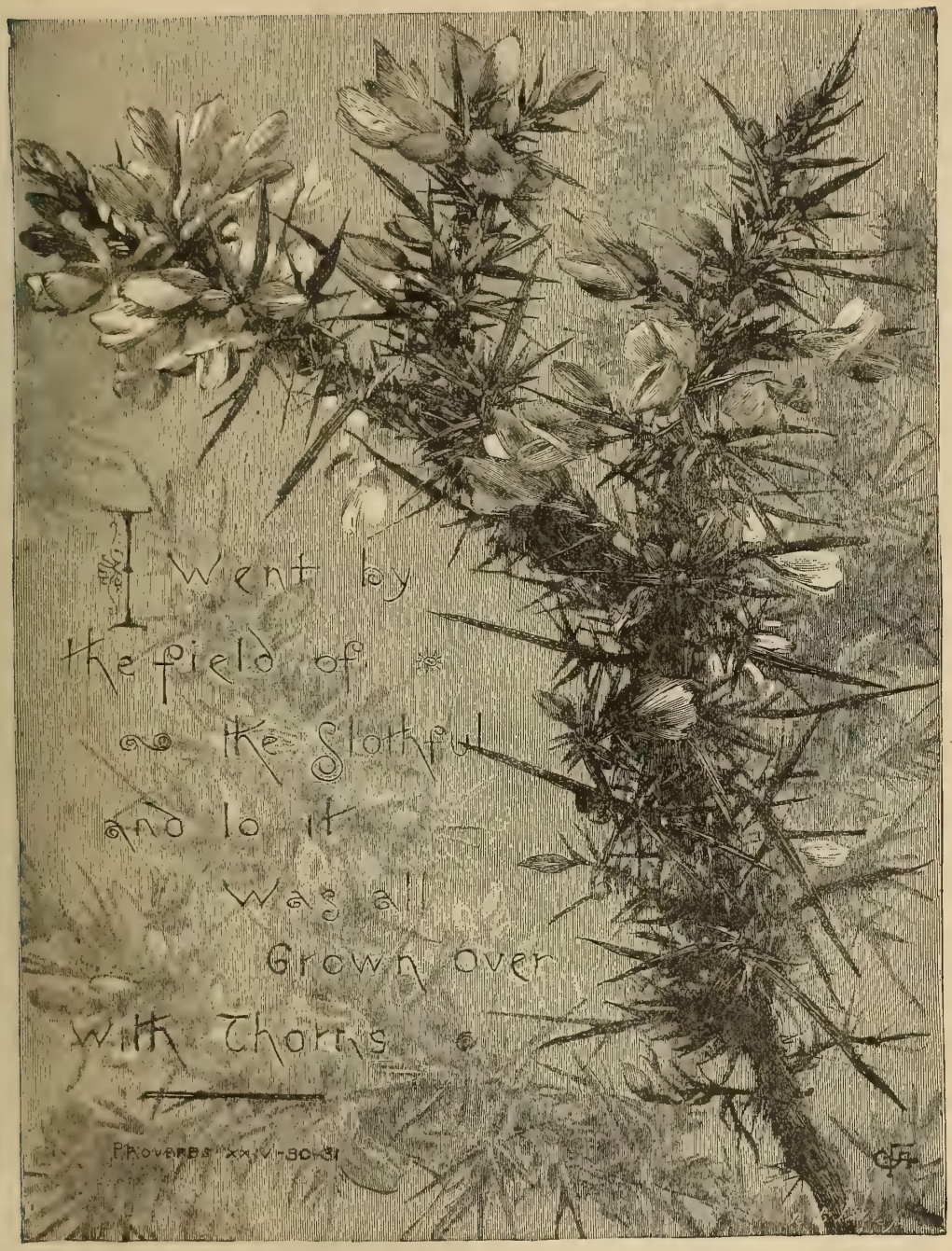
But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

They Shall do Mischief.

After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom.

So Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. And he died, being more than four score and ten years old.



THORNS IN THE FIELD OF THE SLOTHFUL.

"SUMMER AND WINTER SHALL NOT CEASE."

CHAPTER XXIII.

B. C. 536.

RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY—REBUILDING THE TEMPLE—KING DARIUS—EZRA ARRIVES AT JERUSALEM—TOO MUCH WICKEDNESS—WIVES TAKEN FROM THE HEATHEN—ARRIVAL OF NEHEMIAH—THE WALLS REBUILT—THE ENEMY THWARTED—EZRA READS THE LAW—STORY OF QUEEN ESTHER—A GREAT FEAST—QUEEN VASHTI—THE JEWS IN DANGER—HAMAN'S WICKED PLOT—ESTHER SAVES HER PEOPLE—HAMAN HANGED.

YRUS, king of Persia, when he had taken the city of Babylon, made proclamation throughout all his kingdom to this purpose: The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and hath commanded me to build him a house at Jerusalem. Let all, therefore, that are of his people go up to Jerusalem and take their part in the building of this house. I command also that their neighbors help them with money and goods and beasts for their journey, even as I myself have made a freewill-offering for this house.

Then many of the Jews went up to Jerusalem, and Cyrus gave into their hands the vessels of gold which Nebuchadnezzar the king had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and put into the house of his gods. They that went up were forty-three thousand and upwards, and they had of men-servants and maid-servants seven thousand and nine, and two hundred singing men and singing women. On the first day of the seventh month all the people came together as one man to Jerusalem, and the priests and the princes built an altar of sacrifice, and began the daily sacrifice, morning and evening. And on the fifteenth day of this month they kept the Feast of Tabernacles, according to the ordinance.

After this they began to prepare for the building of the temple, hiring masons and carpenters with money, and exchanging corn and wine and oil for cedar-trees of Lebanon, which the Tyrians and Sidonians brought by sea to Joppa. In the second month of the second year they laid the foundations of the temple.

Trumpets and Cymbals.

And when they laid them, the priests stood in their robes with trumpets in their hands, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, praising God in the words of King David, as they were sung on the day when the ark was taken into the tent which David had made for it. And all the people shouted with a great shout when the priests and the Levites praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Nevertheless, certain of the old men, who had seen the former house that the Chaldeans burnt with fire, wept aloud when they saw the foundations laid, because they were so small; and no man could distinguish the shout of joy from the noise of weeping.

After this the people of Samaria came to them that were building the temple, and said, Let us build with you; for we worship your God even as ye do; and we have done

sacrifice unto him ever since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us hither.

Now these Samaritans were strangers whom the kings of Assyria had brought from Babylon and other cities of their dominions, and had put in the country from which the children of the Ten Tribes had been carried away captive in the days of Hoshea, king of Israel. But Zerubbabel and Joshua and the other chief men said to them, Ye have nothing to do with us, that ye should join in building a house to our God; we ourselves, and none besides us, will build a house to the Lord God of Israel, as Cyrus, king of Persia, hath commanded us. Then the Samaritans gave bribes to the counsellors of the king that they should hinder the work. This they did in the days of Cyrus and of Cambyses his son, but the work was not stopped.

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS FROM CAPTIVITY.

And when Cambyses was dead, and Gomates the Magian reigned in his stead, giving out that he was Smerdis, son of Cyrus—but, in truth, Smerdis had been slain by his brother Cambyses—the governor of the province of Samaria wrote a letter to this purpose: Be it known unto the king that the

Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, to build again that bad and rebellious city, building the walls and laying the foundations. Be it known also unto the king that if this city be built and the walls set up again, this people will not pay toll, tribute or custom, and so will his revenue suffer loss. Now it is not meet that we who have our livelihood from the king should see him so dishonored, and therefore we send this to the king that search may be made in the records of the kings thy fathers concerning this people. Of a truth thou shalt find in the said record that this was ever a rebellious city and hurtful to the king, and that for this cause it was destroyed.

A Wicked Command.

Now to this letter the false Smerdis made this answer: The letter which ye sent was read to me. And I commanded that search should be made, and it was found that this city of old time hath made insurrection, and that there have been great kings therein who have ruled over all countries westward of the river Euphrates, and that toll and tribute hath been paid to them. Command therefore that these men cease from their building.

This letter the false Smerdis wrote, and all the more willingly because, being a Magian, he would not that any man should worship in temples, and the religion of the Jews was hateful to him. When the Samaritans received this letter they went up to Jerusalem, and made the people cease from their building by force.

But when the false Smerdis was dead, for Darius, the son of Hystaspes, slew him and reigned in his stead, Haggai and Zechariah, who were prophets of the Lord, stirred up the chief men of the Jews that they should begin again to build the walls and the temple. So they began, and when their enemies asked, Who hath bidden you to build this house and this wall? They would not cease till they should receive a commandment from King Darius.

And when the governor of the province saw this he wrote to the king to this purpose: Be it known unto the king that the house of the mighty God in the province of Judea is being built with great stones, and that the work goeth on fast. And when we asked the elders of the people, Who commanded you to do this? They said, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build again his house. Long ago a great king of the land built it; but when our fathers provoked the God of heaven, he gave us into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who destroyed this house and carried away the people captive. Then in the first year of Cyrus a decree was made that we should build this house again; and Cyrus gave us also the vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the former house. So the Jews answered us, Let the king therefore cause search to be made, that he may know whether King Cyrus made such a decree.

The Decree Is Found.

So Darius caused that they should make a search for this decree, and they found it in the house of the rolls at Egbatana. Thereupon Darius sent to the governor of the province, saying, We have found that it is as had been said by the Jews, that Cyrus gave commandment that this house should be built. Hinder it not therefore, but rather help, giving the people that whereof they are in need—money from the king's tribute, and bullocks and rams for sacrifice, and wheat and salt and oil and wine for the food of the priests, that they may worship the

God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. Whosoever shall seek to alter this decree which I, Darius, have made, let timber be taken out of his house, and let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill. Thereupon the adversaries of the Jews gave help to them according to the king's commands, and on the third day of the month Adar, which is the twelfth month, in the sixth year of Darius the king, the temple was finished. And after this the people kept the Feast of the Passover, according to the ordinance, on the fourteenth day of the first month. The whole time from the decree of King Cyrus, which he made in the year of the taking of Babylon, down to the decree of King Darius was two and twenty years. During this time the house of the Lord was built, and the people worshipped.

BUILDING A NEW TEMPLE.

A long time after these things, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who was the grandson of King Darius, it came into the heart of a certain Ezra to go up to his brethren at Jerusalem. This Ezra was of the house of Aaron, and he was also learned in the law; and he had found favor in the eyes of King Artaxerxes, who gave him commission to inquire how the people fared at Jerusalem and in the land of the Jews.

Also the king sent by the hand of Ezra and his companions freewill-offerings of silver and gold, six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and a hundred talents of gold, and silver vessels of which the value was a hundred talents, and twenty basons of gold, and two vessels of fine brass as precious as gold. Also the king commanded that the treasures that were beyond the river Euphrates should furnish to Ezra a hundred talents of silver, and of wheat one thousand bushels, and of oil and of wine one hundred gallons of each, and of salt as much as he would.

On the Banks of the River.

Further, all that were priests or Levites, or porters or singers, or did any work whatsoever in the house of God were to be free of tax and tribute. Ezra also was to judge his people according to the law of his God, and any one that would not obey the law of God and of the king should suffer death or confiscation of goods or imprisonment.

On the first day of the first month Ezra went out from Babylon, and in nine days he came to a river that is called Ahava. There he abode three days, till the Levites should come, for there were none with him. Also because there were enemies lying in wait by the way, he proclaimed a fast there by the river, that they might pray for a safe journey, for he was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect them against their enemies, seeing that they had told the king that the hand of their God was upon all that sought him for good, and against all them that forsook him. After this, on the twelfth day of the first month, they departed from Ahava, and came safe to Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month.

But when Ezra was come to Jerusalem he was told that many of the people had taken wives for themselves and for their sons of the people of the land, of the Canaanites, and of the children of Ammon, and of Moab, and of the Egyptians. And when he heard it he rent his garment and his mantle, and plucked out the hair of his head and his beard, and sat down in sore distress. Thus he remained till the time of the evening sacrifice, and all the people saw him.

Ezra's Confession.

And at the time of the evening sacrifice he rose up, and when he had again rent his garment and his mantle, he fell upon his knees and prayed, saying, O my God, I am ashamed to lift up my face to thee, for our iniquities have gone over our head and our trespass hath provoked thee. Our fathers sinned against thee, and thou didst deliver them into the hand of the kings of the nations round about. And now thou hast showed us mercy for a little space, and suffered a remnant to escape, giving us favor, though we were but bondmen in the eyes of the kings of Persia, that we build again the house of God and the walls of Jerusalem. And now we have sinned yet again in thy sight, taking to ourselves wives of the people of the land, concerning whom thou didst command us, saying, Give not your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters to your sons, and seek not peace with them nor to be enriched with their wealth! Now, O Lord,

we cannot stand before thee because of this our sin.

And when Ezra had ended his confession and his prayer he prostrated him upon the ground, weeping, and a great multitude of men and women had assembled before the temple, and they also wept.

Then one of the princes who had taken strange wives stood up, and said, We have trespassed against our God in this matter; but yet there is hope, for the people repent them of their sin. We will make a covenant to put away these strange wives. The matter is in thy hands. We will obey thy counsel.

Heathen Wives.

Then Ezra and the princes made a proclamation that all the people should come to Jerusalem within three days, and that if any man failed so to come, his goods should be confiscated. So the people came, and Ezra said to them, Ye have transgressed against the law of the Lord by taking to yourselves wives of the heathen. Now therefore separate yourselves from them.

And the people answered, It is so; and as thou hast said, so must we do. But the people that have transgressed are many, and this a time of much rain, and we cannot remain out of doors; neither is this a work of one day or two. Let there be appointed, therefore, a council of rulers and judges at Jerusalem, who shall inquire into the matter, and bring it to an end.

And this was done, for the council sat from the first day of the tenth month till the first of the year following, and so made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives. The number of those that had transgressed was one hundred and eleven, of whom seventeen were priests and ten were Levites.

But though Ezra and the princes were zealous, nevertheless the work languished till God raised up a new helper, Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah. This Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes; and in the twentieth year of the king, Hanani, who was his brother, came up from Jerusalem to Shushan, and Nehemiah asked him concerning the Jews that had returned and concerning Jerusalem.

A Broken Wall.

Hanani answered, They of the captivity that went up to Jerusalem are in great affliction and reproach; and the wall is broken down, even as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, broke it down, and the gates are burned with fire.

Then Nehemiah fasted, and mourned certain days, confessing his sins and the sins of his people, and praying to the Lord that he would cause him to find mercy in the sight of the king, for he was resolved that he would speak to him and make a petition for his people and his city. In the ninth month, he heard the evil news concerning Jerusalem, and in the first month, his turn came to serve the king.

And when he took the wine to give it to the king, the king saw that he was sad, and he had not been before sad in his presence. Then the king said, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Nehemiah was sore afraid, for it was held that a Persian could not but be glad when he was with the king, and that to be sad in his presence was a crime. And he said to the king, Let the king live for ever! Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place where my fathers are buried, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

Then the king said, For what dost thou make request? And Nehemiah answered, If it please the king, and if I have found

favor in his sight, send me to Judah, to the city where my fathers are buried, that I may build it. Then the king said—the queen sitting by him—For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? And Nehemiah set him a time.

Also he said, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river Euphrates, that they may convey me till I come to the land of Judah; and a letter also to Asaph, the keeper of the king's park, that he may give me timber for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the walls of the city, and for my own house. All this the king granted to him, God inclining his heart to favor his people.

Nehemiah at Jerusalem.

Nehemiah set out from Shushan, having an escort of horsemen with him, and, crossing the Euphrates, showed the king's letter to the governors of the province. But Sanballat of Beth-horon, who was the chief man among the Samaritans, and Tobiah his counsellor, who was an Ammonite and a slave, were grieved exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

So Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, but he told no man why he had come. After three days he went out by night, riding alone upon a mule to see the city. He went out by the gate that opens into the valley of Hinnom, and turning eastward came to the gate by which the refuse was carried forth from the city; and he saw as he went that the walls were broken down and the gates burnt with fire.

Thence he went on to the gate that is by the pool of Siloam, that is called the King's Pool; but here the beast that he rode could not pass. Therefore he went along the channel of the brook Kidron, and so returned to the gate of the valley of Hinnom. But the rulers knew not whither he went, nor what he did, for he had not told his errand to any man.

But the next day he said to them, Ye see the distress that we are in, and how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates are burned with fire. Come, let us build up the walls, that we be no more a reproach. Then he told them how he had found favor with God and with the king.

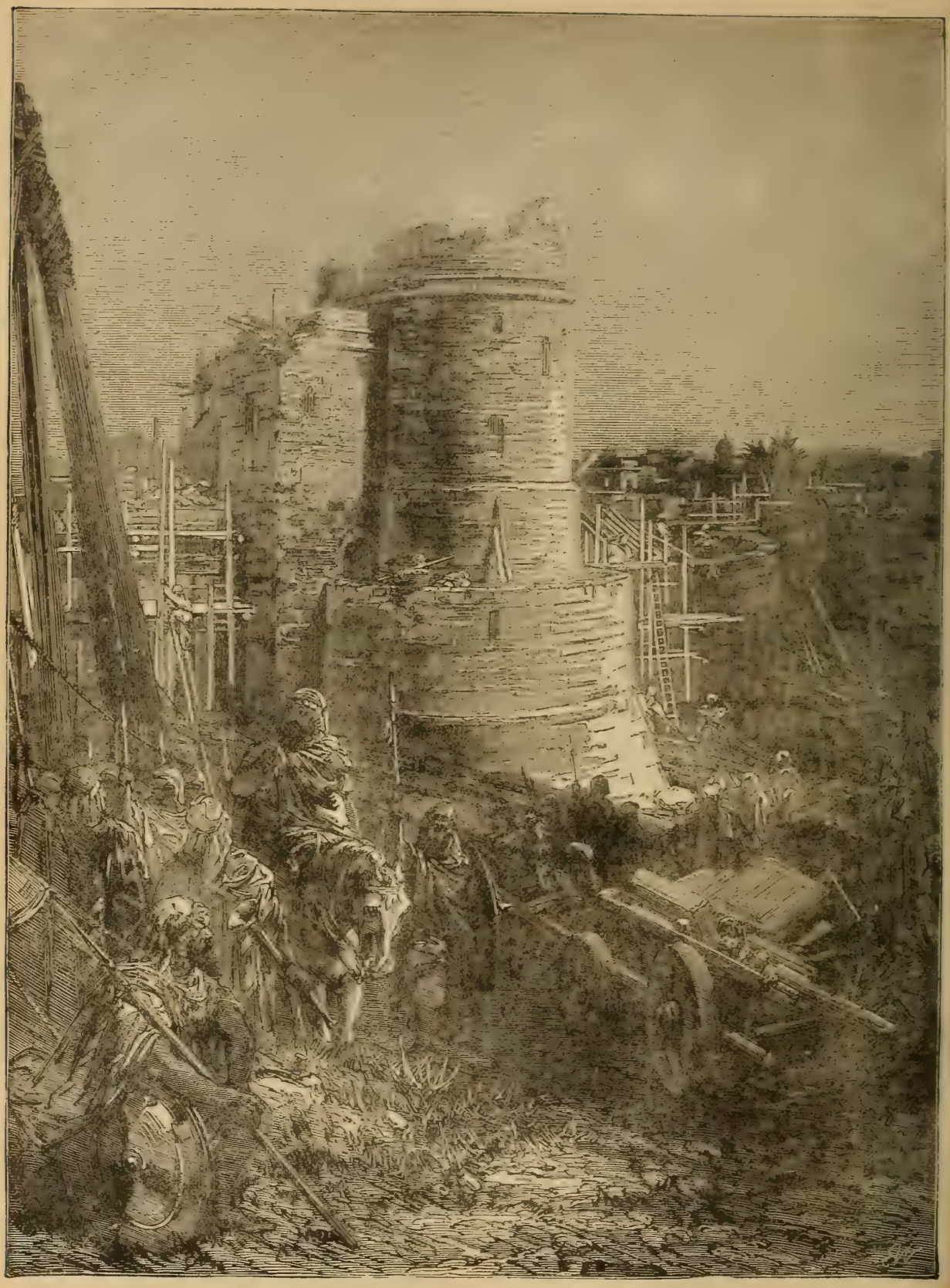
And they said, Let us rise up and build. And they took courage for the work. But Sanballat and Tobiah, and with them Geshem the Arab—for there were Arabs also in Samaria—laughed the Jews to scorn, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king? To them the Jews answered, The God of heaven will prosper us. Therefore we who are his servants will arise and build. But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.

Guards with Spears and Swords.

Then Nehemiah, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people built the wall of the city, both the outer wall and the inner—that is to say, the wall of the city of David.

But when Sanballat heard of it he was very angry; and he said to his companions, What are these feeble Jews doing? Shall we suffer them to build in this fashion? And Tobiah the Ammonite mocked, saying, As for this wall of theirs, if a fox go up on it, he shall break it down.

Nevertheless the Jews persevered with their building till the wall had reached to the half of its proper height. But Sanballat gathered together a company of his own people, and of the Ammonites, and Arabs, and Philistines, and prepared to come up to Jerusalem and hinder the work; and there



was great discouragement and fear, for some of the people of the city grew weary, and the Jews that were in the country near to the Samaritans would have taken away those whom they had sent to help in the work; and all the while the enemy threatened that they would come up, and slay the builders, and cause the work to cease.

Then Nehemiah set guards, with spears and swords and bows, on such parts of the wall as were low and weak; and he set others where the ground gave them advantage for defence; and to the nobles and rulers and all the people he said, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, for he is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your houses.

Both Hands Full.

From that time forth half the people worked at the building of the wall, and the other half had spears and shields and bows and coats of mail, the rulers standing behind them, encouraging them in the work, or ready, if there was need, to lead them against the enemy.

Many, indeed, whether they carried the stones or laid them in their places, with one hand wrought the work, and with the other carried his weapon. And the trumpeter stood ever by Nehemiah's side, ready to sound upon his trumpet; for Nehemiah had said to the nobles and the rulers, and the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us; our God shall fight for us.

So the people labored in the work from the rising of the sun till the stars appeared. And Nehemiah said, Let none return to his own village or city at night; but let every man lodge within Jerusalem that they may be a guard at night. And neither Nehemiah nor his brethren, nor his servants, nor his bodyguard put off their clothes save only when they would wash themselves.

After this there was a murmuring of many of the people against their brethren; for some said, We have pledged our children that we may get food, and others, We have mortgaged our lands, our vineyards, and our houses for bread because of the famine, and others again, We have borrowed money upon our lands and vineyards to pay the king's tribute.

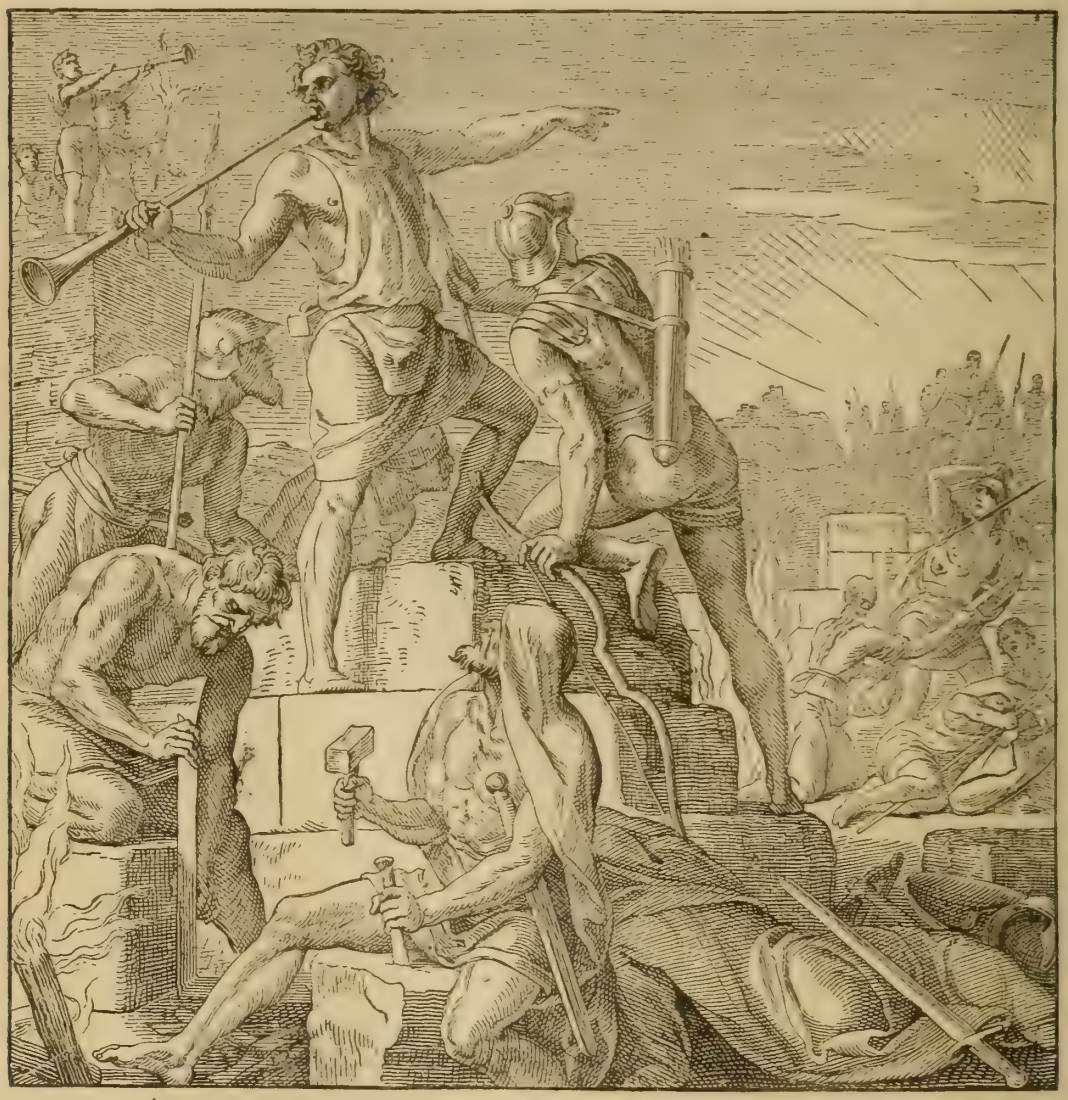
And Nehemiah was very angry when he heard these complainings, and he said to the nobles, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. As for me, I have to the best of my ability redeemed my brethren who had been sold to the heathen; and shall we, who are saved, cause them to be sold? Now, therefore, I pray you, give back to them their lands and their vineyards and their oliveyards, and the money that ye have taken from them.

Shakes the Pocket of His Robe.

The nobles answered Nehemiah, We will take nothing from them; we will do as thou sayest. And Nehemiah made them swear, calling the priests that they might be witnesses to the oath. And he shook out the pocket of his robe, saying, So God shake out every man from his house and from his labor that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen.

And the rich men did as they had promised. For twelve years was Nehemiah governor of the land, and all that time he received nothing; but the governors that were before him had received forty shekels of silver day by day. Neither did he take

advantage because the people were poor to buy land. But every day he fed at his table one hundred and fifty of the principal men, besides giving entertainment to such as came from the countries round about. Every day



NEHEMIAH AND HIS WORKMEN.

were prepared an ox and six choice sheep and fowls; and once in every ten days his cellar was stored with wine.

When Sanballat and his allies heard that the walls were finished, and that there was no breach left in them—only the doors were not put into the gates—they sent to Nehemiah, saying, Come, let us meet in one of the villages of the plain of Ono. This Ono is in Benjamin; but they thought to do him a mischief. But Nehemiah sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Four times they sent to him, and

four times he answered in the same way.

Then Sanballat sent his servant a fifth time with an open letter wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen that thou and the Jews think to rebel, and that thou buildest the wall that thou mayest be their king, and that thou hast appointed prophets to declare, There is a king in Judah. Now all this shall be reported to the king at Shushan. Come, therefore, let us take counsel together. But Nehemiah said, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

After this Shemaiah said to Nehemiah, Come into the house of God, and let us shut the doors of the temple, for thine enemies will come to slay thee. Yea, in the night will they come.

Now it was not lawful for any man to come into the temple, save for the priests and the Levites only. So Nehemiah answered, Should such a man as I am flee? Can I go into the temple and live?

The Wall Built.

So he perceived that Shemaiah had not spoken this of the Lord, but that the enemies had hired him to terrify him, and cause him to sin, that they might bring an accusation against him. And there were others, calling themselves prophets, and one Noadiah, a prophetess, that spoke in this matter seeking to terrify Nehemiah.

But the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month—that is, in fifty-six days from the beginning of the work. The compass of the wall was four miles or thereabouts, and all the people worked at it, being divided into twenty-seven companies. Then Nehemiah made Hanani his brother governor over the city, and he commanded that the gates should not be opened till the sun was hot. The city was large; but the people were few, and the houses were not built.

At this time Ezra the scribe came back to Jerusalem—for he had been absent while the wall was being built—and the people pressed him that he would read the book of the law. So Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood with the priests about him, and he opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above them all; and when he opened it all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Feast of Tabernacles.

Then the Levites explained the words of the law to the people; but these lamented when they understood them, for they saw how greatly they had transgressed. But Nehemiah, and Ezra, and the priests, and the Levites said unto them, This day is holy to the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep, but go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared. Be not ye sorry, for the Lord your God is your strength. Then the people did as they were bid.

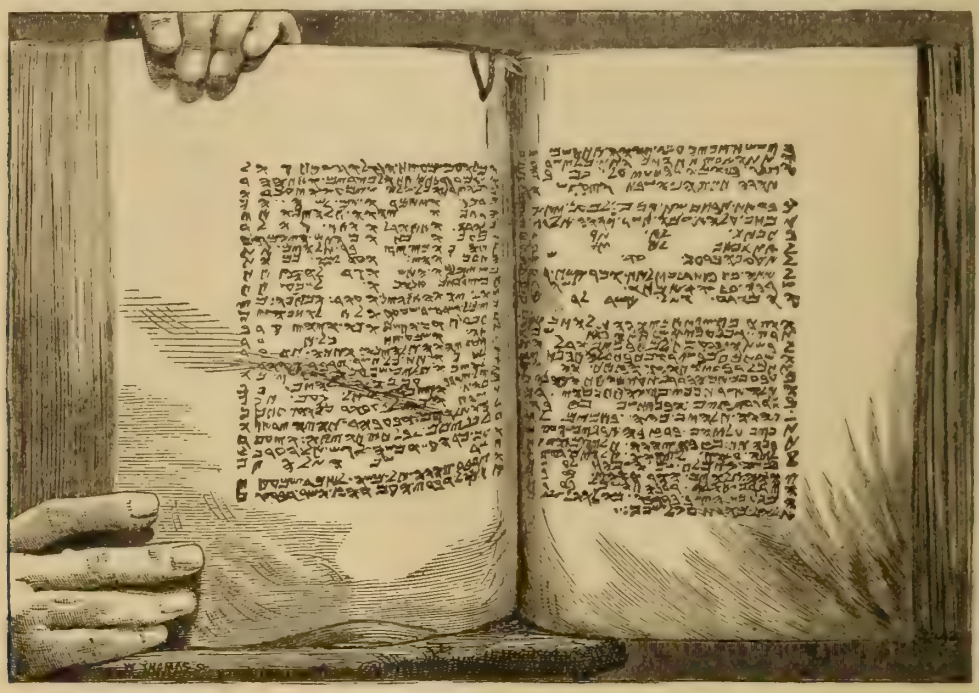
And on the second day the chief of the fathers came to Ezra the scribe; and it was found that the Lord had commanded Moses that on the fifteenth day of the seventh month the people should dwell in booths, which they should make of branches of olive and wild olive, and myrtle and palm, and other trees of which the leaves are thick. And this the people did, making booths, each man for himself, on the roof of his house, or in the courtyard, or in the courts of the temple, or in the courts that

are over against the water-gate and the gate of Ephraim.

Such a Feast of Tabernacles there had not been in Israel since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun. For seven days they kept it, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly as the Lord ordained. And on the twenty-fourth day of this same month was there a great fast held, and the children of Israel assembled clothed in sackcloth, with dust upon their heads. One-fourth part of the day they read the law, and for one-fourth part they confessed their sins, and worshipped the Lord.

And they made a covenant that they would serve him and obey his commandments, wherein they vowed that they would not take wives from the people of the land, nor buy or sell on the Sabbath day; and that they would pay each the third part of a shekel year by year for the service of the temple; and would bring the first-fruits of their lands, and redeem also the first-born of their children, and the first-born of their cattle, and bring the tithes duly to the Levites. And to this all the princes set their seal.

When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, carried away from Jerusalem Jehoiachim, king of Judah, and the principal men of the people of the Jews, there was among the captives a certain Kish of the tribe of Benjamin. This Kish had a son that was named Shimei. In Shimei's time Cyrus, king of Persia, came up against Babylon and took it, and carried away to the land of Persia many of the Jews, of whom Shimei was one. To Shimei was born a son Jair, and to Jair again a son Mordecai, who, growing to man's estate, was made a doorkeeper in the king's palace in Shushan, which the Greeks called Susa.



TWO PAGES OF AN ANCIENT SCROLL OF SCRIPTURES.

With this Mordecai there lived a maiden, the daughter of his father's brother, who had been left an orphan in her childhood. The maiden's name, in the language of her own people, was Hadassah, which word means Myrtle; but in the Persian tongue it was Esther, which is by interpretation a Star.

In those days Ahasuerus, whom the Greeks called Xerxes, was king of Persia, a very great and powerful prince, who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. He ruled all Asia westward as far as the Great Sea (which is the Mediterranean) and eastward as far as the land of India; Egypt also was subject to him, and Cyrene and Barca, cities of the Greeks which lay westward of Egypt towards the Great Desert; and the Ethiopians, who dwelt to the south of Egypt paid tribute to him.

A Magnificent Feast.

Having so much, he desired to have yet more, and to conquer the land of Greece. To this end he called together to his palace in Shushan the governors of all his provinces, that he might consult with them, and that each might know what preparation he should make in men or horses or ships. These councils were held for the space of a hundred and eighty days, for some of the governors came from very far away.

And when they were ended the king made a great feast to all the people in Shushan. In the garden of the palace he made it; and the guests sat under awnings of white and green and blue, which were stretched from pillars of marble on cords of fine white linen and purple running through rings of silver. The couches on which they lay at meat were of silver and gold, and the pavement of the banqueting-hall was stone of many colors, green and pearl-colored and white and black.

They drank out of cups of gold, and all the cups were of different patterns; every man drank according to his own pleasure, none compelling him to drink less or more, for the king had commanded that it should be so. And Vashti, the queen, at the same time, made a great feast for the women of Shushan in the chambers of the women in the king's palace.

Thus they feasted for seven days; and on the seventh day the king, having drunk deep, commanded his chamberlains to bring Vashti the queen, with her crown upon her head, before the princes and the people to show them her beauty, for she was very fair to look upon.

She Refuses to Come.

But the Queen Vashti, when the chamberlains brought her the king's commandment, refused to come. Thereat Ahasuerus was very angry; and he called his counsellors, the seven princes of Media and Persia, who were the first in his kingdom, and who could come freely into his presence, and said unto them (for they were wise men, and knew the laws and customs of the land), What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to the law, for that she has refused to obey the commandment which the king sent her by his chamberlains?

Then Memucan, who was one of the seven princes, answered before the king and princes, Vashti the queen has done wrong not to the king only, but to all the princes and to all the people that are in the provinces of the king. For her deed will become known to all the women of the land, and when they shall hear how King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought before him, and she refused to come, they will despise their husbands, and will speak to the princes of Persia and Media as Vashti

has spoken to the king. Therefore, if it please the king, let there go forth a royal commandment that Vashti be no longer queen, and let this be written among the laws of the Medes and Persians, so that it be not changed; and further let her royal estate be given to another that shall be better than she.

This counsel pleased the king and his

QUEEN ESTHER CROWNED.

princes, and he sent a decree into every province of his dominion, written in the language of its inhabitants, that every man should be the master in his own house.

After this a search was made throughout the kingdom for the maiden that should be worthiest, for beauty and favor, to be put into the place of Queen Vashti, and in the end Esther, that was the cousin of Mordecai the Jew, was chosen, and the royal crown was set upon her head. And Ahasuerus loved her greatly, and made a feast in her honor to all his princes and servants, and gave remission of taxes to the provinces, and sent gifts to their governors.

About this time two of the chamberlains of Ahasuerus took offence, and combined against him, and would have slain him, for they kept the door, and had access to the king's person. But the thing came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and Mordecai told it to Esther the queen, and Esther told it to the king. Thereupon inquiry was made, and the plot was discovered, and the conspirators

put to death. All this was written in the chronicles of Persia, how these men had conspired against the king, and how the matter had been discovered by Mordecai.

After these things the king promoted a certain Haman to be his chief minister, and set him above all the princes, and commanded that all the king's servants should do him reverence as he came in and out, prostrating themselves on the ground before him. And they all did so save Mordecai only, but he refused.

All the Jews in Danger.

And when his fellows asked him, Why do you not pay reverence to the Lord Haman according to the king's commandment? He answered, Because I am a Jew, and it is not the custom of the Jews to do such honor to men. When they heard this, they told it to Haman, desiring to see whether he would hold Mordecai to be excused. But Haman was full of wrath, and was minded not to slay Mordecai only—for that seemed too small a thing for him to do—but all the people of Mordecai throughout the whole dominions of the king, for he knew that he was a Jew.

When he had determined upon this he set himself to find out a lucky day for the doing of it. So his servants threw dice before him every day from the beginning of the first month to the end of the twelfth, and the day on which the throws were highest throughout the year was judged to be the most lucky.

On this day, therefore, Haman said to the king, There is a people dispersed throughout the king's dominions in all the provinces. They have laws that are different from the laws of all other nations, and they do not obey the commandments of the king. Therefore it is not to the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let a decree go forth that this people be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of the collectors of the king's revenues that they may pay it into the treasuries of the king. This was more than ten million dollars.

The Day of Massacre Appointed.

The king thereupon gave his ring to Haman, saying, The people are given to you to do as you will with them, and their goods also. Then the royal scribes were brought in, who wrote letters to the governors of all the provinces with the king's command that on a certain day they should cause all the Jews—men, women, and children—to be slain.

These letters were written on the thirteenth day of the first month, and the same day they were given to swift runners, who, having carried them a day's journey, handed them to other runners, and these again to others, till they reached the appointed place. And because to some of the provinces there was a journey of many weeks, the day appointed for the slaughter was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, being nearly the space of a year.

This matter of the letters being finished, the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the whole city of Shushan was troubled when it was known what the king had decreed. Then Mordecai the Jew rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his skin, and sprinkled ashes on his head, and sat down before the gate of the king's palace, and cried as he sat with a very loud and bitter cry. But beyond the gate he could not go, for no man that had any sign of mourning upon him might enter the palace, lest he should give offence to the eyes of the king.

Thereupon the maidens that waited upon Queen Esther and her chamberlains told her, Thy kinsman Mordecai sits before the gate

of the palace lamenting, with sackcloth and ashes on him.

Then the queen was exceedingly grieved, and she sent raiment wherewith to clothe Mordecai, and bade her people take away his sackcloth from him. But he would not receive the raiment or put off his sackcloth. Then she sent her principal chamberlain, one Hatach, whom the king himself had appointed to wait upon her, and bade him inquire of Mordecai what was the matter that troubled him.

So Hatach went forth into the open space that was before the king's palace and said to Mordecai, What troubles you? Then Mordecai said, The king has commanded that all the Jews throughout his dominions should be slain, and Haman has promised that if this be done, he will pay into the king's treasury ten thousand talents of silver.

And he gave him a copy of the decree to show to the queen, and said, Bid her go unto the king, and make supplication to him, and pray him that he will spare her people, And Hatach came and told Esther the word of Mordecai.

Esther's Message.

Then Esther sent Hatach again to him with this message: All the king's servants, yea, and all his people even unto the border of his dominions, know that there is a law that any man or woman that shall come unto the king into the inner court, being not called so to come, shall die, except the king shall hold out to him the golden sceptre. But I have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days past. Hatach told these words to Mordecai.

Then Mordecai sent again to Esther, saying, Think not that thou being in the king's palace wilt escape more than the rest of thy people. If thou wilt say nothing, then deliverance shall come to the Jews from some other place, but thou and thy father's house shall perish. Dost thou not rather think that thou hast been called to the place of a queen in Persia that thou mayst work deliverance for thy people in this time of their peril?

Then the queen sent to Mordecai this answer: Go, gather together all the Jews that are in Shushan, and fast for me, neither eating or drinking for three days; I also and my maidens will fast, and so I will go in unto the king. If I perish, I perish. And Mordecai did as Esther had commanded him.

On the third day of her fasting Queen Esther put on her royal apparel and went into the inner court of the king's house; and the king sat in his chamber, that was over against the gate of the inner court, and when he saw the queen standing in the court, she found favor in his sight, and he held out to her the golden sceptre.

Haman Summoned to the Banquet.

Then she drew near and touched the top of the sceptre. The king said to her, What ails thee, Queen Esther? And what is thy request? For it shall be given thee, even unto the half of my kingdom. And Esther answered, If it seem good to the king, let the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared; for she feared to show at that time all that was in her heart. The king sent to Haman, and bade him make haste and come to the banquet that the queen had prepared. So the king and Haman came to the banquet.

And as they sat at the wine, the king said to Esther, What is thy petition? It shall be granted to thee even unto the half of my kingdom; for he knew that she had something that she would ask of him. But Esther yet feared to show the thing. Therefore

she said, If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, then let the king and Haman come again to-morrow to the banquet that I shall prepare, and to-morrow I will make known my request.

Haman went forth from the queen's presence that day with a joyful heart; but as he passed by the gate of the king's palace he saw Mordecai; and Mordecai, as before, refused to prostrate himself on the ground before him; nay, he did not stand up nor move from his place.

Wants Mordecai Hanged.

And Haman was full of indignation; nevertheless he restrained himself, and went to his house. And when he came thither he called for Zeresh his wife, and for his friends, and boasted to them of his greatness, of his riches, and of the number of his children—for he had ten sons, and the Persians greatly honor those that have many sons—and how the king had honored him, promoting him above all his princes and servants. Yea, he said, this day Esther the queen did let no man save myself come in with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and to-morrow also I am invited with the king. But all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

Then Zeresh and his friends said to him, Cause that a cross threescore and fifteen feet high be set up, and to-morrow speak unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon, and then go thou merrily with the king into the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman, and he caused the cross to be made.

That night the king could not sleep; so he sent for the book of the records of the kingdom, and bade his servants read to him out of it, for it was not the custom among the Persians that the king should read. And it was found written therein that two of the king's chamberlains that kept the door of his chamber had conspired to slay the king, and that Mordecai had told the matter to the king.

Haman Before the King.

Then the king said, What honor and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this? Then the king's servants answered, There has been nothing done to him. Then the king said, Who is in the court?

Now Haman had come into the court of the king's house to make request to the king that Mordecai might be hanged on the cross that he had made. So the king's servants said, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in.

And the king said, What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor? And Haman thought in his heart, To whom will the king delight to do honor more than to myself! And he answered, Let apparel which the king is wont to wear be brought for him, and the horse on which the king rides, and the royal crown that is set upon his head; and let these things be delivered to one of the most noble of the king's princes, that he may array the man with them, and cause him to ride on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

Then the king said, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hath said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sits at the king's gate.

And Haman took the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and made him ride through the great square, and pro-

claimed before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

And Mordecai went back to his place at the king's gate, but Haman returned to his house mourning, and with his head covered; and he told Zeresh his wife and his friends all that had happened to him. And they said to him, If Mordecai be of the race of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him. And while there were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlain, and bade him make haste and come to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

So the king and Haman came in unto the banquet that the queen had prepared. And the king said to Esther, for he knew that she had something in her mind, What is thy petition? It shall be granted thee even unto the half of my kingdom.

They Hanged Haman.

Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life and the life of my people be granted to me, for we are sold to be slain. If we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, then had I said nothing. But what shall the king profit if he gain ten thousand talents of silver and lose so many of his people?

Then the king said, Who is this that has dared to devise such a thing against thee? For he knew not that the queen was of the race of the Jews?

And the queen answered, My enemy is that wicked Haman. Then the king in his wrath rose from the banquet and went out into the garden of the palace. And Haman was sore afraid, and fell at the feet of the queen to make supplication for his life.

And when the king saw it he said, Will he dare to touch the queen? And as the word went out of the king's mouth, the chamberlains covered Haman's face. And one of them said, There is a cross threescore and fifteen feet high, which Haman caused to be made for Mordecai. And the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged him upon it, and the king's wrath was pacified.

That day the king gave to Esther the queen all that Haman had possessed. And when Esther told him that Mordecai was her kinsman, the king gave him his ring, and set him in the office which Haman had had.

But the decree that had been sent out against the Jews yet stood. Therefore Esther went in again to the king, and when he held out to her the golden sceptre, she said, If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if I be pleasing in his eyes, then let the decree which Haman caused to be made against the Jews be reversed, for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my own people, or bear to see the destruction of my people?

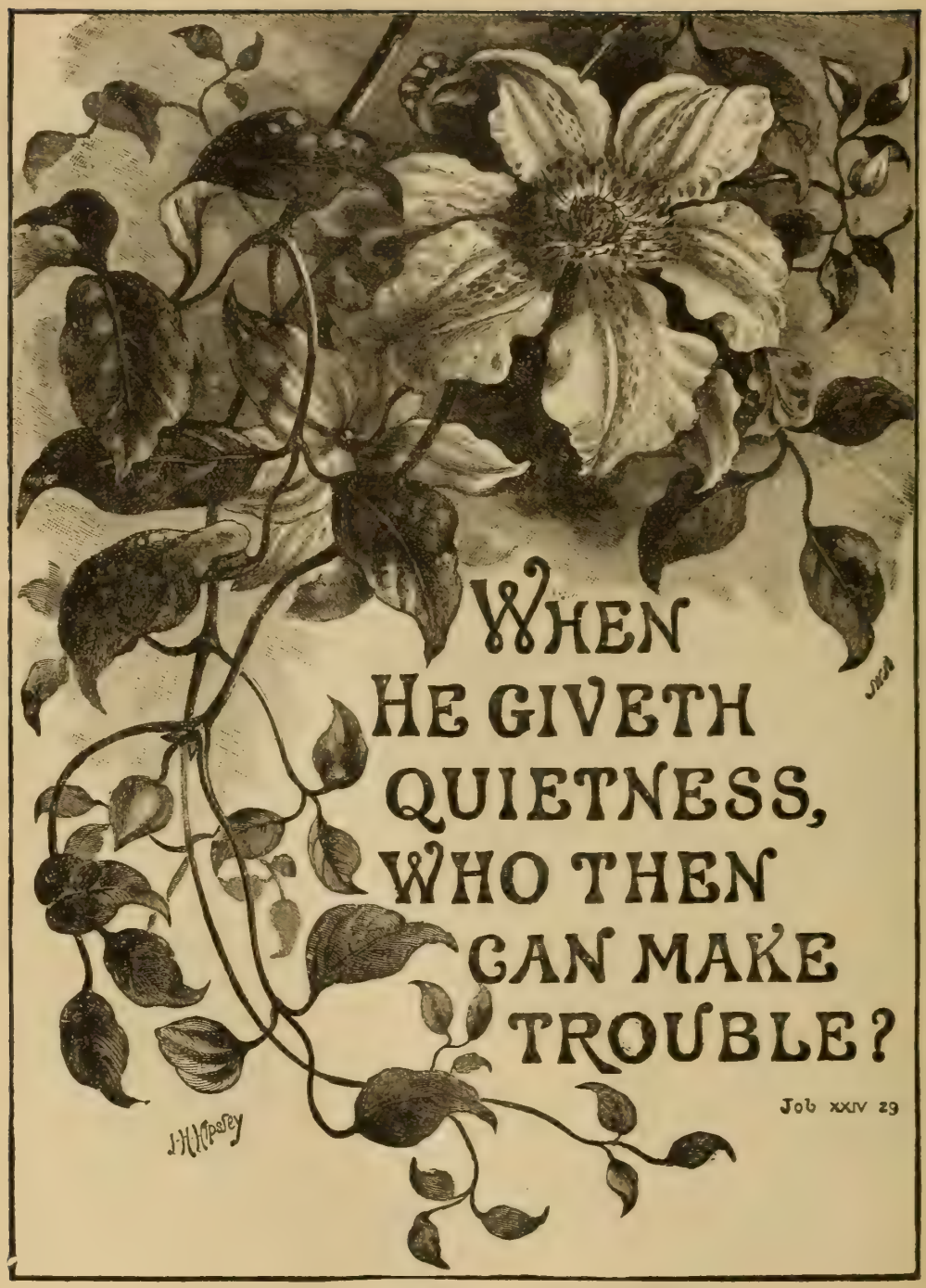
The Jews Are Delivered.

Then the king said, Haman have I hanged because he laid his hand upon thy people, and his house have I given to thee, but the writing that is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring no man may reverse. Nevertheless ye may write what ye will on behalf of the Jews in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring.

So Mordecai wrote in the king's name to the governors of all the provinces throughout the realm of Persia to this effect, that it should be lawful for the Jews that were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, and to slay all such as should assault them, and to take their goods for a prey. This they did and gained the victory over their enemies.

JOB RECEIVES FROM MESSENGERS NEWS OF HIS MISFORTUNES.

THE TREASURES OF WINTER.



"THOU WILT KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE."

CHAPTER XXIV.

B. C. 1520.

THE STORY OF JOB—SONS, DAUGHTERS AND GREAT POSSESSIONS—SATAN AMONG THE SONS OF GOD—MESSENGERS BRING STARTLING NEWS—JOB AFFLICTED WITH BOILS—A VISIT FROM THREE FRIENDS—JOB'S GRIEVOUS COMPLAINT—BETTER DAYS AT LAST—PRESENTS AND CONGRATULATIONS—INCREASE OF RICHES.

HOW patient Job was is told us in the book that is called by his name. He lived in the land of Uz, and was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan, answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side; thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

They Bring Evil News.

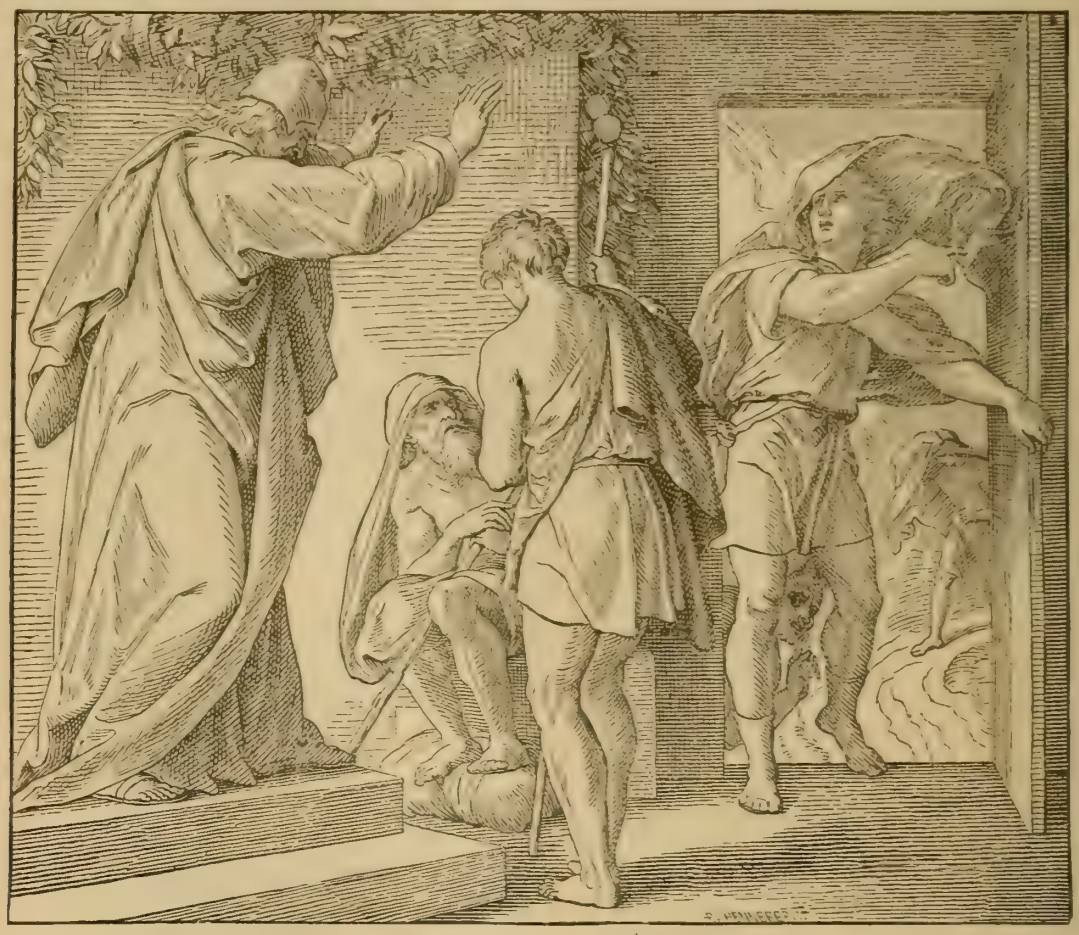
And there was a day when Job's sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the

sheep, and the servants, and consumed them, and I only have escaped to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this



THE MESSENGERS TELLING JOB OF HIS LOSSES.

and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth,

and from walking up and down in it.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

Smitten with Boils.

So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came to mourn with him, and to comfort him. And they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed the day wherein he was born, and said, Why did I not give up the ghost in the day wherein I was born, for then should I have slept and been in quiet where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

And Job's three friends reasoned with him, but he hearkened not unto them; but justified himself rather than God.

Job's Complaint.

He said, is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work: So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity. What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every

moment? How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust: and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

Then the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS.

Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

So they did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.

JOB VISITED BY HIS RELATIVES.

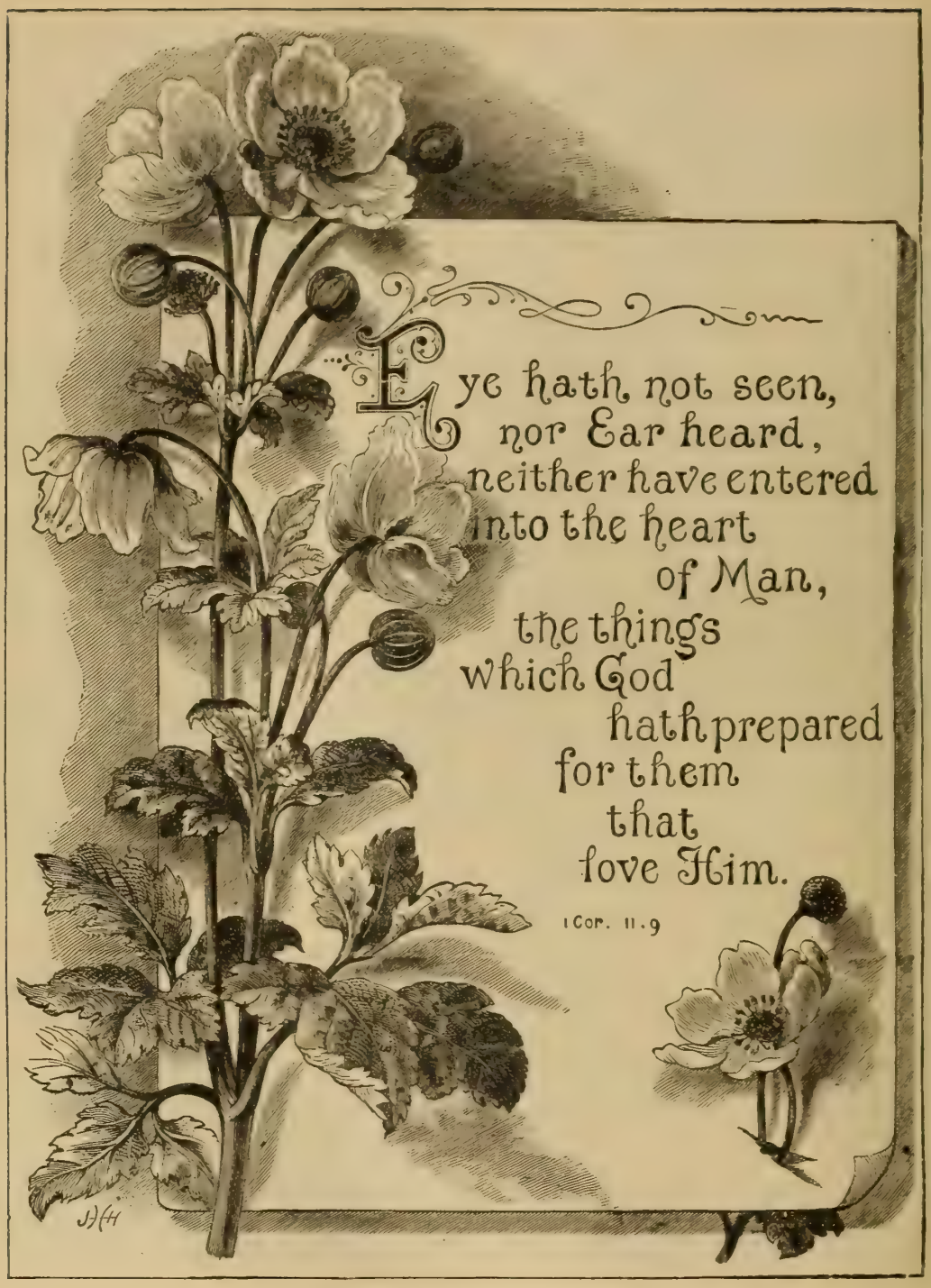
And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.

He had also seven sons and three daughters. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.

THE ANGELS APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS.



THE JOYS THAT ARE UNSEEN.

THE Story of Christ and the Apostles.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE STORY OF BETHLEHEM—A ROMAN EMPEROR—ZACHARIAS IN THE TEMPLE—AN ANGEL BRINGS A MESSAGE—BIRTH OF JOHN FORETOLD—AN ANGEL APPEARS TO MARY—ELISABETH VISITS HER COUSIN—THE CHILD NAMED JOHN—JOSEPH AND MARY AT BETHLEHEM—BIRTH OF THE CHILD JESUS—THE ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS—SCENE IN THE TEMPLE—HAPPY OLD SIMEON—GOOD NEWS FOR THE WORLD—THE ANTHEM OF PEACE.

ONE night at Bethlehem a child was born, and because there was no other place for him he was laid in a manger. The story of this child is the most wonderful ever written. For many centuries he had been promised, and it was foretold that he would be different from any other person that ever lived. A great many of the people who lived in Palestine were expecting him, and many persons in other countries were also looking for the coming of one who would bring some great blessing to the world. God had said that when he came he would be a Jew. That means, one of Abraham's family. The Jews were very proud about that. They often talked about the coming of this remarkable person, and when they spoke of him they called him the Messiah.

The Jews were very unhappy just now. The soldiers belonging to the great city of Rome had been fighting with them, and the Jews had been made servants of the great Roman king. He was called the Emperor or Augustus Cæsar. Augustus Cæsar gave the Jews another king called Herod. They did not like Herod at all, for he was wicked and cruel. He actually killed some of his own sons, for fear they would want to be king instead of him. Herod killed his wife, and her father and mother and brother, and he killed his own uncle.

They Wanted a Better King.

The Jews longed to get rid of Herod, and many of them thought, It will be all right when the Messiah comes. The Messiah will fight against the Romans; he will drive them away from our land; and then he will be our king instead of that wicked Herod.

Palestine is a very hilly country, and in Judæa, the southern part of the country, the hills are very high and rugged. In a town amongst those hills, just at the time when people were expecting the Messiah to come quickly, there lived a priest whose name was Zacharias, with his wife, whose name was Elisabeth. Zacharias and Elisabeth were so good that nobody could find fault with anything they did. They tried to please God in everything.

But one thing often made them sad. They had never had any children. Often and often they had asked God to give them a little boy. But no little son had ever been sent to that home amongst the hills.

One day, most likely in the beginning of

October, when the grapes of Palestine are ripe, it was the turn of Zacharias to go for a week to the temple to help in the services there. So he left his wife and his home, and went over the hills to Jerusalem. Priests were only allowed to offer incense once in the whole of their lives. One morning or evening, while Zacharias was in Jerusalem, he was chosen to do it.

When he went into the Holy Place he wore the same dress the priests always put on when they were busy in the temple—cap, coat, drawers, and long sash, all made of white, shining material. But he had no shoes. In the East, people always take off their shoes when they go into holy places, instead of taking off their hats, as men do in our own country.

And now the golden gates of the Holy Place were shut, and Zacharias was left alone inside the temple to burn the sweet-smelling incense. A little bell was rung, and the people in the courts outside fell down to the ground and prayed; and we may be sure that Zacharias, as he burned the incense, prayed too with all his heart. Inside and outside the temple there was a great silence.

Joyful News.

Just then, close to the place where the incense was burning, Zacharias saw an angel of the Lord. That angel's name was Gabriel. When Zacharias saw the angel, he was afraid; but there was nothing to be frightened about. The angel had only come to bring him good news. God was going first of all to send Zacharias and Elisabeth a son, and then—the Messiah was coming! The angel told Zacharias what his son's name was to be called, John.

Gabriel told Zacharias what sort of child John would be. He said that the little boy would make his father and mother very happy, and that a great many persons would be glad when he was born. And, best of all, he said that John would be God's servant always, even from the time he was a baby; and that when he grew up he would prepare a people for the Lord.

What did "preparing a people for the Lord" mean? In the land where Zacharias lived, the roads were very stony and rough. When a great man was coming to any of the towns, he used to send servants on before him to make his way ready. These servants used to pick up the rough stones from the roads, and throw them away; and they mended the roads, and made them smooth and straight.

Clearing the Road.

And then, as the great man came along, they shouted to the poor men and women, and the camels and donkeys that were anywhere near, Make haste, make haste, move out of the road! This was called preparing the way. Preparing is the same as getting ready.

And now that Jesus was coming, God was sending John to make his way ready. John was not to make the roads of Palestine smooth for the feet of Jesus to walk upon. He was to make the hearts of the Jews ready for Jesus. The angel said that God would give John his Holy Spirit to help him in this work.

When Zacharias heard the news that the angel had brought, he could not believe it He thought, It is too good to be true. The angel told him that it was quite true, but that, as he did not believe God's message, he should be dumb until his little child was born.

The people in the courts outside the temple had finished praying now; and they could not understand what kept Zacharias so long

in the Holy Place. Presently the golden gates were opened, and Zacharias came out

THE ANGEL APPEARING TO MARY.

to the top of the steps; he kept on moving his hands about, and trying to explain what had happened, but he could not speak at all. Then the lamb which had been killed for sacrifice was burned, and a psalm was sung, and the silver trumpets were blown, and a

priest blessed the people, and the people went home; and Zacharias went back again to his home amongst the hills of Judæa, and told his wife Elisabeth what had happened. Though he could not speak, yet he could write down anything he wanted to say.

The Angel's Visit to Mary.

Elisabeth, who lived amongst the hills of Judæa, had a cousin who lived in a little town called Nazareth, among the hills of Galilee. The name of Elisabeth's cousin was Mary. Mary was going to be married to a carpenter called Joseph, who lived, like herself, in the town of Nazareth. But she was not married yet. She was still living at home.

One day God sent an angel to Mary with a message. Mary was in-doors when the angel came to her and he said, The Lord is with thee.

Mary was very much surprised when she saw and heard the angel, and she was a little frightened too. But the angel told her not to be frightened. He had some glad news for her. The Son of God, the Messiah, was coming into the world very soon, and he was to come to earth in human form as Mary's little child. And the angel said that when he was born, Mary must call him Jesus. The angel told Mary too the good news about her cousin Elisabeth, that God was going also to send her a son.

Elisabeth lived more than a hundred miles away from Nazareth, but Mary longed so much to talk about all these wonderful things with her that she at once got ready for a long journey, and went off into the hill-country of Judæa to see her cousin. Oh, what a happy meeting that was!

God had told Elisabeth's secret to Mary, and now when Mary got to the town where her cousin lived, and went into her house, and said, Peace be upon you (that is what people always say in the East), God told Mary's secret to Elisabeth. And Elisabeth was filled with joy, and she called Mary the Mother of my Lord, and blessed hér. And Mary's heart and lips said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. These words are very often sung in church.

We do not know any more about Mary's visit to Elisabeth, excepting that she stayed at her cousin's house for about three months, and that then she went back to her home in Nazareth.

And now the time had come when God had promised that he would send Elisabeth a son. And when the baby was born, her relatives and her friends were delighted, and they came to see her, and to thank God with her for his great kindness.

He Is Named John.

The little Jew babies have a name given to them when they are eight days old. This baby's father, Zacharias, was dumb, you remember; he could not speak, but his friends said that his little child ought to be called Zacharias, like him. When Elisabeth heard that, she said, Not so, but he shall be called John. And they said to her, There are none of thy relatives called by that name; and they made signs to Zacharias to know what name he would choose (for Zacharias was deaf as well as dumb, and he could not hear what they were talking about).

Then Zacharias asked for a tablet—a piece of wood covered over with wax, and he wrote on the wax with a pointed iron pencil. This is what he wrote, His name is John. The friends were surprised that Zacharias too had chosen that name. They did not know that God had told him to

choose it. And how much more surprised they must have been when the dumb man opened his mouth and began to speak!

Yes, Zacharias could speak now, and the very first thing he did was to thank and praise God for keeping his promise about sending the Messiah. And then, turning to his new-born son, he said, And thou, child, shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways. That was just what the angel had told Zacharias when he was in the Holy Place. Zacharias did not believe God's message then, but now he believed it with all his heart.

ZACHARIAS WRITING A NAME FOR THE CHILD.

We do not know much more about John when a boy; but we know that he grew and grew until he became a brave, strong man.

One night, very soon after Mary got back from her cousin Elisabeth's house, the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream. The angel told Joseph to marry Mary, and he told him Mary's beautiful secret about the Son of God coming to earth as her little child, and he said to Joseph, Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. When Joseph woke up, his first thought was to do what the angel had told him. At once he took Mary to his own home as his wife.

About this time Cæsar Augustus sent

word to Herod that he was to take a census of the Jews. A census is taken in this way: Everybody's name is written down and his age, and many other things about him. And then when the list, or census, is finished we know how many persons there are in the country. Every one in Palestine excepting old people and little children had to pay money every year to Cæsar Augustus, and some of the Jews were obliged to be his soldiers; and every twenty years Augustus had a census taken, so that he might know exactly how much money the Jews ought to pay him, and how many Jew soldiers he ought to have.

There was a curious plan in Palenstine at census time. People had to go to the towns where their fathers' fathers lived a long time ago, and had to have their names put down there, instead of having them put down in their own homes.

No Room at the Inn.

Now, both Joseph and Mary belonged to the family of the great King David, who was born in Bethelehem. So Mary had to prepare once more for a long journey, and had to go with her husband to Bethlehem. Bethlehem is six miles from Jerusalem. It is on the top of a hill, and people have to climb up a difficult, slippery road to get into the town. But Mary could not rest even yet after her long journey; for the inn where Joseph meant to stay was quite full.

The inns in Palestine have four walls, with a door in the front, and with a great empty space for camels and horses inside. In the very middle of that empty space there is a fountain; and all around the walls, just a little bit higher than the part where the animals are, there are a number of places like empty stone arbors. These empty places are called leewans, and they are quite open in front, so that everybody can see what everybody else is doing.

The people of the East carry their own beds, something like eider-down quilts, and their own cooking pots and pans with them when they are on a journey, and they cook, and eat, and sleep in these leewans at night. When they go away, they do not have to pay anything. Yet Mary and Joseph, after all their long journey from Nazareth, could not find even an empty leewan to lie down in. What were they to do?

Near that inn there was another place, in which asses and camels were kept. It must have been a cave, a great hole in the side of the hill. And because there was no room for them in the inn, Mary and Joseph had to go into that stable to sleep. And in that stable Jesus was born. And Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger in the place where the animals food was kept.

Swaddling clothes are cloths which are wrapped round and round the babies in the East. Their arms, and legs, and bodies are wrapped up tightly in these cloths, and their heads are fastened up with a little shawl. They look almost like mummies, as only the face can be seen.

Killed a Lion and Bear.

The great King David, who had ruled over the land a thousand years before this time, had been at first only a poor shepherd boy. He lived in the city of Bethlehem, to which Joseph and Mary had now come, and took care of his father's sheep in the fields beyond.

One day, when he was out with the flock, a lion came rushing out of the forest near by, and seized one of the lambs. He would soon have devoured it, but David ran after him, and though he had no weapon but his

THE WISE MEN PRESENTING THEIR GIFTS

shepherd's staff, he killed the lion, and delivered the lamb out of his power. Another day, a bear came forth and attacked the flock in like manner, and him also David slew with his shepherd's staff.

That had happened a thousand years before, but still the shepherds of Bethlehem were obliged to watch their flocks by day and by night, to guard them from wild beasts.

On the night when the little child was born in the stable, the shepherds went as usual to their work in the fields, little thinking of the wonderful things they were to see and hear before the morning dawned. Suddenly, as they were watching their flocks, they saw a great light above the brightness of the stars, and in the midst of the light an angel. They were filled with fear. But the angel said to them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Visit from the Shepherds.

Then the angel went on to tell them how they should know the Saviour of the world from all other children, and gave them a sign by which to discover him. This, he said, shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

When the angel had finished speaking, the whole sky became covered with shining angels, and a multitude of the heavenly host sang praise to God, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

After this the vision disappeared, the sound of voices ceased, the light faded from the sky, and the shepherds were left alone as before. When they had recovered from the awe and astonishment that had seized them, they said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

They set out at once, and came with haste to Bethlehem; and there, when they had reached the stable, they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. Then they remembered the sign which the angel had given them, and knew that this was the child of whom he had spoken, and they hastened to tell their friends and neighbors all that they had heard from the angel concerning him.

They Go Back Praising God.

All were astonished at those things that were told them by the shepherds, and the shepherds themselves returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all the wonders that they had heard and seen.

Eight days afterwards, the child was circumised according to the Jewish custom, and he received the name that had been given to him by the angel before his birth—the name of Jesus.

The Jewish law commanded that the first-born son of every family should be solemnly presented to the Lord as soon as he was six weeks old; and when the child Jesus had reached this age, he was taken to Jerusalem by Joseph and Mary, that this ceremony might be performed in the temple, according to the usual custom.

Jerusalem was the chief city of the land of Israel. It had been taken long ago by King David, who built a fort round it to defend it from enemies, and made a palace for himself to live in. He wished also to build a temple to the Lord, and gathered together great stores of gold and silver, brass and iron, hewn stones and cedar-wood, wherewith to make it beautiful.

He was not able, however, to do as he desired with regard to the building, but he charged his son Solomon to carry out his purpose, and Solomon built a temple which was the wonder of all lands for splendor and magnificence. This temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Assyria, who had conquered Jerusalem and carried away the Jews into captivity, but they had long since returned from that captivity, which only lasted for seventy years, and now another temple stood in the place of the first.

The Child Brought to the Temple.

The new temple had been begun by King Herod about nineteen years before this time, and was still not quite finished. It had a golden dome or rounded roof, which glistened in the sunshine, and it was approached by avenues of beautiful marble pillars. Inside, it was divided into two parts, which were surrounded by many outer courts. The first of these was called the Holy Place, and here the sacrifices were offered up to God, when they had been slain by the priests upon a huge altar of brass. Beyond this was the Holy of Holies, which was hidden by a curtain drawn before it, and never entered except once a year by the High Priest alone.

To this beautiful temple Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus, to present him to the Lord. It was usual, at the same time, to present a lamb of a year old to be sacrificed on the great altar; but those who could not afford so costly an offering, might bring instead a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. As Joseph and Mary were poor people, they offered the humbler gift of a pair of birds, and when these had been laid upon the altar, and had yielded up their life, the priest took the child into his arms, and solemnly blessed him.

Now there lived at this time in Jerusalem a certain man named Simeon, who was just and devout, and who was waiting for the consolation of Israel. All the children of Israel who really cared for their country were grieved because their land was under the yoke of the Romans, and were looking and waiting for a deliverer who should save them from their enemies. Long ago, the prophets had spoken of a Messiah who should come in the time of trouble to comfort his people, to put an end to all evil, and to reign in power and righteousness, extending his kingdom over the whole world.

Simeon was a very old man. He had lived a long life in obedience to the commandments of God, and the Holy Spirit of God rested upon him and directed all his actions. It had been revealed to him that he should not taste of death until he had seen the Lord's Christ, and day by day he was looking for the Messiah to come.

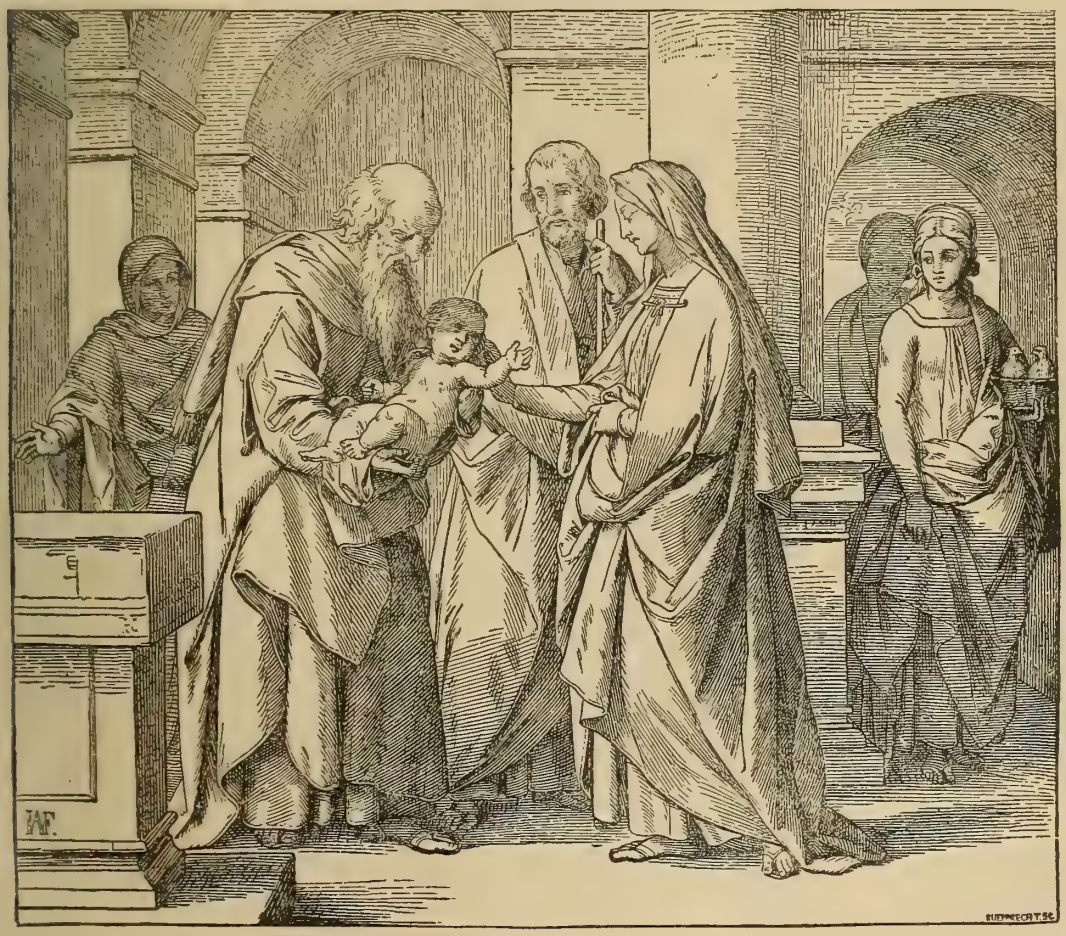
A Happy Old Man.

On the day when Jesus was presented to the Lord, the Spirit of God moved Simeon to enter the temple just at the moment when the priest had taken the child into his arms to bless him, and as soon as he saw the child, Simeon knew that this was he for whose coming he had been waiting so long. He took him up in his arms, and praised God, saying, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Joseph and Mary were filled with wonder at those things that Simeon had spoken concerning the child, and Simeon blessed them both, and told them again that this child would be the Saviour of his people.

Just then there entered into the temple an

aged prophetess called Anna. She was of a great age, having been a widow for eighty-four years, and she was continually in the temple, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day. When she heard the words of Simeon, she also gave thanks to the Lord, and to all those in Jerusalem who were looking for the Messiah she told the good news that the Saviour had come.



SIMEON TAKING THE CHILD IN HIS ARMS.

In a country east of the land of Israel, there lived some wise men, who spent much time in studying the stars. Every night they observed the heavens; and they knew all the stars one from another, and gave to each a name of its own. In those days, people believed that by such studies they could foretell great events that were going to happen; and especially when a great king or hero was about to be born, they thought it was sure to be signified by some unusual appearance in the sky.

The wise men had watch-towers from which to observe the movements of the stars, and one night, when as usual they were looking attentively at the heavens, they suddenly perceived the appearance of a star that they had never seen before. It grew brighter and brighter, and soon there could

be no doubt that it was indeed a new star. They were very much astonished, and said one to another that some wonderful event must be going to take place.

Then one of the wise men remembered what he had once read in an old book, and he said, Long ago it was foretold by a prophet of our race that a star should come out of Israel, and a king arise who should smite down all the enemies of his people. This star must be sent to tell us that the king of whom that prophet spoke has now been born in the land of the Jews.

Herod Greatly Troubled.

One of the others answered, This is no doubt the meaning of the star. Let us go, then, and pay our homage to the new-born king, and offer him presents.

To this they all agreed, and immediately they began to prepare for the journey. The servants made ready their camels, their mules, and their asses, and they took with them rich presents, gold, and sweet-smelling spices, and herbs that cure disease. As they travelled across the desert at night, they could see the star shining high above their heads. On it went, in front of them, and following the path it seemed to point out, they came at last to Jerusalem, the chief city of the land of Israel.

When they reached Jerusalem, they went at once to the palace of the king, whose name was Herod, and said to him, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him.

Now Herod was a wicked king. He had been set on the throne by the Romans, and as long as he had power and riches, it was nothing to him that his country was under the yoke of a foreign people. He was not one of those who were looking for the Redeemer of Israel, and he had heard nothing of the birth of Jesus, or of what had been said about him by Simeon and Anna. The words of the wise men troubled him, for was not he himself the king? He did not want to hear of any other king.

Nevertheless he concealed his fear and anger, and sent for all the most learned men in Jerusalem, that they might search through the old books to see what had been said about the birthplace of the Messiah. They found that he was to be born in Bethlehem, for the prophet Micah had said, And thou Bethlehem, though thou art but a small city, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be Ruler in Israel.

Then Herod told the wise men that they had better go to Bethlehem to seek for the newly-born King, and he said to them, When ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. He did not really mean to worship him; his mind was full of wicked thoughts, but for his own purposes he wished to find out where the child was.

Found in a Strange Place.

The wise men journeyed on to Bethlehem with their servants and their treasures, and the star still went before them. When they reached the city, they again inquired for the child that had been born of the kingly family of David, and were directed to the house where Joseph and Mary were now living. At last they had reached the end of their long journey, and now they were told that the King whom they had travelled so far to see was to be found, not in a palace, but in the house of a poor carpenter.

But they were not offended or turned aside on this account. They made their way to the house that had been pointed out to them, and when they had come to it, they

looked up and saw the star, which seemed to be shining right over it, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Then they entered in, and found the young child and Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him their gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Many beautiful pictures have been painted to represent this scene, and in them the wise men, or the Magi as they are sometimes called, usually appear as three kings, clothed in gorgeous robes, and with crowns on their heads, kneeling before the Infant Saviour, and offering him their presents.

When they had made an end of offering their worship and their treasures, the wise men returned to their home in the far East.

WISE MEN OF THE EAST PRESENTING THEIR GIFTS.

They did not go back to Jerusalem, but departed unto their own country another way, for they were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to tell Herod where to find the child Jesus.

Herod was thus kept in ignorance for

a time, but when he found that the wise men had failed to come back and tell him that which he desired to know, he became very angry, and thoughts more wicked than ever took possession of his mind. He was determined to kill the newly-born King of the Jews, for he feared that otherwise, when the child grew up, he would take away the kingly power from him; and having made up his mind to this wicked deed, he would not let himself be baffled because he did not know which child it was whose life he desired to take.

He thought that if he killed all the children of Bethlehem, the child Jesus could not escape from perishing with the rest, and so he sent his soldiers to the town, and told them to kill every little boy of two years old and under, both in Bethlehem itself and in all the country round about.

All over Bethlehem there was loud weeping and lamentation, for the soldiers of Herod entered every house, and wherever they found a little boy of two years old or less, they pierced it with their spears, and killed it before its mother's eyes. In vain the mothers cried for mercy; the commands of the wicked king were obeyed literally, and they were left to mourn as those who could not be comforted.

KILLING THE MALE CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS OLD.

But Joseph and Mary were not among the sorrowing parents; Jesus was not one of the children who were slain. All this massacre of the innocent children had failed to secure

for Herod the end that he desired, for the one child of whom he was afraid was already far away in a place of safety.

Very soon after the wise men had left Bethlehem Joseph had seen a vision one night in his sleep. The angel of the Lord had appeared to him in a dream and said, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Immediately Joseph rose up, while it was still night, and saddled an ass, and when he had set the young child and his mother upon it, he led it quickly away from the town. Before the soldiers of Herod reached Bethlehem, he was already far away, and he led the ass many weary miles across the desert till he came to the land of Egypt.

They Return to Nazareth.

There he tarried until he again had a dream. As before, the angel of the Lord appeared to him by night and said, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

Again Joseph arose and saddled the ass, and led Mary and the child back across the desert to the land of Israel. At first he intended to return to Bethlehem, for now that Herod was dead, he thought there would be no danger in going there; but when he heard that Archelaus, the son of Herod, who was nearly as wicked and cruel as his father, was ruling over that part of the country, he was afraid to go thither. He changed his purpose, therefore, and turned aside into the province of Galilee, to the town of Nazareth, where he and Mary had lived before the birth of Jesus.

For many years Joseph and Mary lived a peaceful, happy life at Nazareth. The town was built on the side of a hill, and looked down upon waving fields of corn, and meadows full of beautiful flowers. In the spring-time every house was like a bower, for the vines crept all over the walls and covered them with garlands of green leaves.

Joseph and Mary had returned to Nazareth richer than when they left it, for they had brought with them the child who had been born in the stable at Bethlehem, and who had been worshipped by the wise men from the East, and declared by Simeon to be the Redeemer of Israel.

How Children Were Taught.

Their house was only a poor working man's cottage, but it was a happy home, for love was there. The child who lived in that poor house was a pattern for all children, rich and poor. No unkind thoughts were in his heart, no untruthful words ever came from his lips; in all things he was obedient to his parents, and kind and gentle to all around him.

When he was old enough, Jesus went to school with the other children of the town, and there he learnt to read and write, and was taught the history of his country.

In those days children were not taught in the same way as now. Printed books were not yet in use, and each roll of manuscript had to be copied out separately, so that such books were very precious, and there was only one for the whole school. This was held up by the master in front of the children, who sat on the floor in a half-circle round him, and repeated the words after him, as he pointed to them. When it was time for the writing lesson, they sprinkled the floor with smooth sand, and traced the letters upon it, either with their forefinger or with a pointed stick.

Jesus was also taught the history of the Children of Israel. He learnt how his countrymen had once been slaves in the land of Egypt, and how God had delivered them from their enemies, and led them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, which had been their home ever since. He learnt, too, about all the great men who had fought for their country, and especially about his own forefather, King David, who had conquered the city of Jerusalem, and his son, King Solomon, who had built the temple there.

Great Feast at Jerusalem.

He was taught, moreover, to study the book of the Law of the Lord, as well as the Psalms that had been written by King David and other poets, and the books of the prophets, all of whom spoke of a Messiah who should come in the latter days to redeem his people.

Thus the days and months passed happily by, until Jesus was twelve years old. At school, as at home, he was always teachable and kind and obedient, and loved by all who knew him.

It was the custom amongst the Jews for all the grown-up people to make a journey every year to Jerusalem to worship in the temple of the Lord, and to hold a solemn feast in remembrance of the time when their forefathers had been delivered from the land of Egypt.

Joseph and Mary went every year to Jerusalem for this purpose, and when Jesus was twelve years old, they took him with them for the first time. It was a beautiful spring morning when they set out from Nazareth, with a large number of their friends and neighbors. The women rode on mules or asses, while the men and boys went on foot. The distance was about eighty miles, and the journey lasted several days. Each night they made a little encampment beside a well of water, and there rested until the morning sun enabled them to continue their way. Then they again started forth, and as they went, they joined in singing psalms of praise to God.

The mind of Jesus was full of happy and solemn thoughts as he walked along the pleasant country roads, and noticed the bright green of the young shoots, and the fruit trees full of blossom, and the flowers springing up along his path. He thought of the deliverance from Egypt, and thanked God for having brought his fathers to such a goodly land. He thought also of all that he had learnt about Jerusalem, and about David and Solomon and the other great men who had lived there, and looked forward eagerly to see it all with his own eyes.

His Parents Lose Him.

At last they reached a hill from the top of which they could catch the first sight of Jerusalem, and a wonderful sight it was. Jerusalem at that time was a magnificent city, with towers and pinnacles of white marble, which gleamed from among the trees, while high above all shone the great golden roof of the temple.

The city was crowded with strangers who had come to take part in the feast, and it was very difficult to find any shelter. Joseph and Mary and their friends from Nazareth were therefore obliged to encamp outside the city, as they had done on the journey, and they made for themselves temporary tents with willow-stems twisted together. They remained at Jerusalem for eight days until the feast was ended, and then all departed together to their own home.

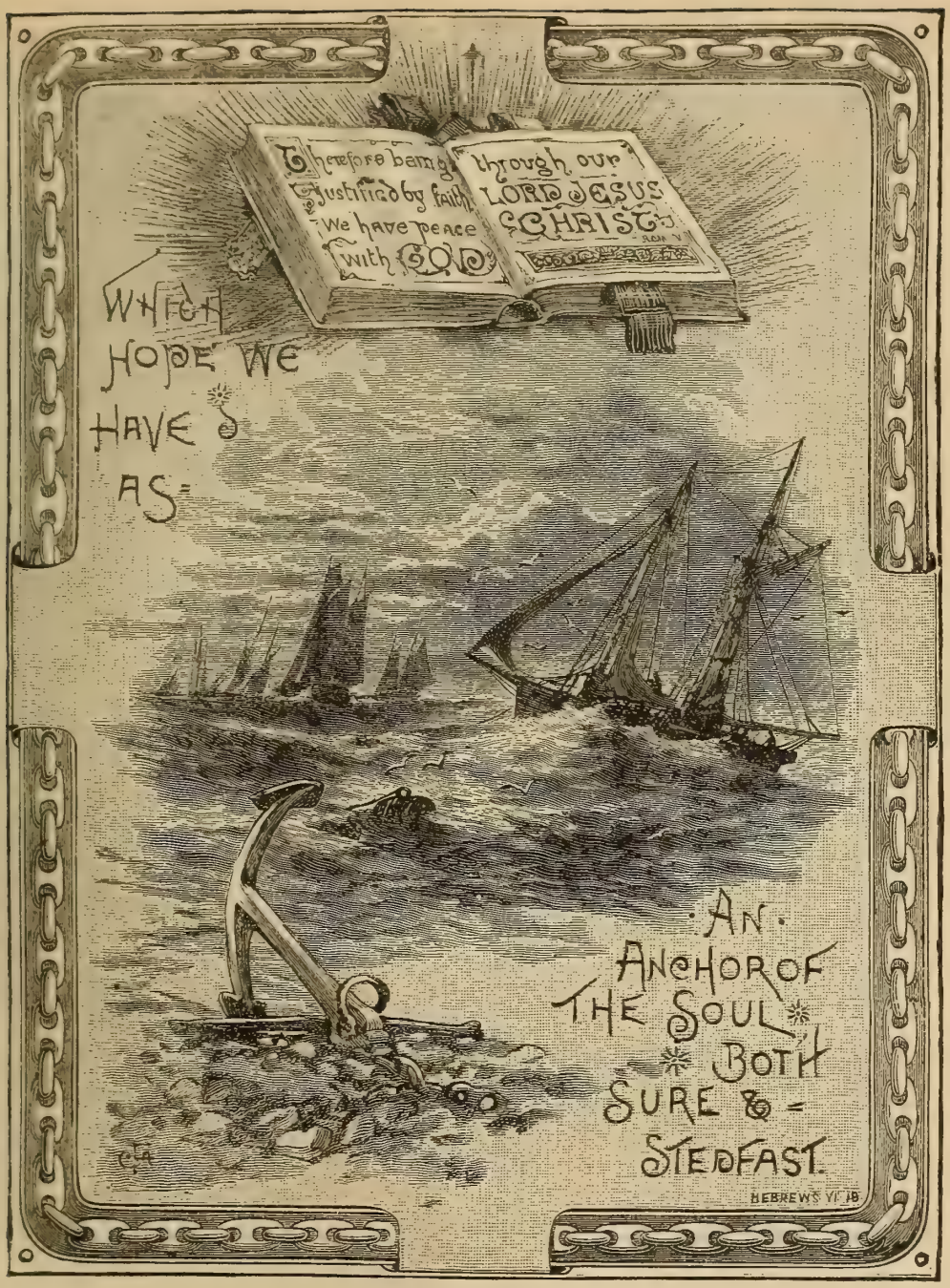
But before they had gone very far, Joseph and Mary discovered that the child Jesus was

JESUS WORKING AT THE TRADE OF CARPENTER.

not with them, and they were filled with alarm. They went round to all their friends and kinsmen to inquire concerning him, but could hear no tidings, and at last they turned back to Jerusalem, to seek him there. It was not until the third day that they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers of the Law, both listening to their words and asking questions when he did not understand their meaning. All were astonished that so young a boy should already know so much. Mary was proud that her son should have gained the approval of the teachers of the Law, but she could not refrain from rebuking him for having given her so much trouble. She said to him, Son, why hast thou dealt with us thus? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. But he said to her, How was it that ye sought me? Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business?

Neither Mary nor Joseph knew what he meant by these words. They did not understand his delight in the Law of the Lord, nor his eagerness to make the most of every opportunity of learning, in order that some day he might be able to teach, but they knew that he would not willingly pain or distress them. They took him back with them to Nazareth, and, as before, Jesus was obedient to them in all things.

Year by year as the boy grew older, he became more loving and more lovable. As he increased in stature, so he increased in wisdom, and in favor with God and men. When he was old enough, he chose, the same trade as Joseph, and earned his living by working in the carpenter's shop. Once every year he went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast, but he always returned to his quiet home at Nazareth. There he lived until he was thirty years old, doing every day his daily duty, and preparing himself by thought and prayer for the great work that lay before him. He had shown in his youth what kind of a man he would be when he grew up.



THE SURE AND STEADFAST ANCHOR.

BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS.

CHAPTER XXVI.

STORY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—JESUS ON THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN—THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS—THE FISHERMEN BECOME DISCIPLES—THE MIRACLE IN CANA OF GALILEE—WINE FROM WATER—JESUS IN JERUSALEM—BUYERS AND SELLERS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE—WORDS OF JESUS NOT UNDERSTOOD—THE MAN WHO CAME BY NIGHT—DISCOURSE TO NICODEMUS.

FOR many more years, eighteen in all, till he grew up to be a man, Jesus remained in Nazareth. He was thirty years old now; but he was living quietly on in the old home. He had not yet begun to preach, or to do any miracle; he was doing his Father's will in the humble home in which he had been brought up.

People had become very wicked in those days. Every kind of iniquity, and wrong, and cruelty was done in the land; and those people who still loved God, and grieved for all the sin that was going on around them, were looking and longing for a Saviour to come, who should take away all the evil, and make the nation better.

The Saviour had indeed come; but they did not know it. And if they had been told that the carpenter of Nazareth was the Messiah, promised in the Scriptures, the Son of God, they would not have believed it. Now, God wanted to prepare the people's hearts to believe in his dear Son, and to receive him as their Saviour. So he sent a messenger to them.

This messenger was John the Baptist. He was a great prophet, and a great preacher; and God's Holy Spirit was in him from the day he was born. He was not dressed like other people; he wore a mantle of camel's hair, and had a leather girdle or belt round his waist.

He did not care what food he ate; he thought so much of the message God had given him, that he did not care for his body; so he ate the common food that only the beggars of that country eat—this was locusts (a kind of large grasshoppers) and wild honey; and he drank the water of the river.

Crowds of people went to hear this wonderful preacher, who was so unlike other men. And John spoke to them about their many sins, and told them all to repent.

By the River Jordan.

As John the Baptist spoke to the people of their wicked ways, and of God's anger, many of them began to see how wrong they had been; and they confessed their sins, and were really sorry for all their wickedness.

Then John baptized them. He took them down to the river and baptized them, as a sign that they were willing to give up their sins, and that God was willing to pardon them, and to wash away their sins.

After that, John spoke to them about the Messiah. He told them that the Lord who was coming was very great and very holy—so holy that even John himself was not worthy to stoop down and untie his shoe—and that he would baptize people with the Holy Spirit, thus cleansing their hearts.

But though John spoke to the people about the Saviour, and told them that he was near, he did not himself know that Jesus was the Saviour. So God said to him, When you see the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven, and resting upon any one, you will know that that one is the Son of God.

Well, while John was teaching, preaching, and baptizing at the river Jordan, Jesus himself came to be baptized.

John was distressed that Jesus, who he felt was so much better than himself, should come like a sinner to be baptized. So he said, I have need to be baptized by you; why then do you come to me?

Jesus answered, Suffer it to be so now; for it is right for us to do all that is commanded. When he said this, he went down to the river, and John baptized him.

The Temptation.

As soon as this was done, Jesus went up out of the water again, praying; and at that moment a wonderful thing happened. The heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God came down like a dove from heaven, and rested upon Jesus. And a voice was heard, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit, and he heard the voice; and so then he knew that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

Directly after Jesus had been baptized, the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness. There were no houses there, nor pretty fields, nor gardens; and there were no people there. For forty days and forty nights, Jesus was in that dreadful wilderness; and all that long time he had nothing to eat.

He was not quite alone there. Some one else was in the wilderness—watching him, fearing him, and hating him. It was Satan. Satan knew quite well that Jesus was the Son of God; and he hated him because he was good, and pure, and holy. But most of all he hated him because he knew that Jesus had come into the world to be the Saviour of sinners. So Satan thought that he would try and tempt Jesus to do wrong. For if Jesus had sinned only once, he could not have been our Saviour.

When the forty days were over, Jesus was very hungry indeed. Satan knew that he was hungry; so now he came and spoke to Jesus. He said, If you are God's Son, make these stones into bread. He wanted to tempt Jesus to doubt his Father's love, and not to wait his Father's time to feed him.

Jesus only replied to Satan out of the Scriptures; and this is what he said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of God. This means, that bread cannot keep us alive if God wills us to die; and that God can keep us alive without bread, if he wills us to live.

The Cunning Tempter.

How different Jesus was to Adam and Eve! They were in a beautiful garden, where they had everything they wanted; and Satan made them sin by tempting them to eat the one thing God had forbidden. They were disobedient. Jesus was in a lonely wilderness, wanting food, and Satan tempted him to eat, to satisfy his hunger; but he would not distrust or disobey his Father. He was always obedient.

Then the devil tried another way to make him sin. He took Jesus into the holy city, Jerusalem, and set him upon a very high part of the temple—so high that it would make one dreadfully giddy to look down—and he said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. Do

not be afraid. You trust your Father, and God will take care of you, and send his angels to keep you from being hurt.

Ah, God's promise is to take care of those who walk in his ways and obey him. But if Jesus had done as Satan told him, he would have been doing the devil's will, and not God's will. So Jesus answered that wicked tempter again out of the Scriptures, all these things, and they shall be yours, if only you will fall down before me, and worship me.

Jesus was very angry with the devil for daring to say such things. Go away, Satan! he said to him; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

After this the devil left him. Weak though

THE TEMPTATION ON THE MOUNTAIN.

It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Once more the devil tried to make him sin. He took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and all the beautiful things that are in them—all the thousands and thousands of people, all the gold, and all the treasures.

Then he said to Jesus, I will give you

he was in body, the Son of God was strong in spirit, and could not be led into sin. And now that the struggle was over, the angels of God came to bring him comfort, and rejoice with him over the victory.

When Jesus had thus overcome the temptations of the devil, he returned to live again amongst men; and at first he went back to the Jordan, where John had meanwhile continued to preach, and to baptize the people.

By this time the fame of John had reached the ears of the priests and Levites who served in the temple at Jerusalem, and they sent certain of their number to ask him who he was, and why he was thus preaching and baptizing. They thought he might be the Messiah who had come already, but John answered, I am not the Messiah. But there standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

What Was Said by John.

One day, as John the Baptist saw Jesus walking along, he said to two men who were with him, Look! There is the Lamb of God.

When the men heard John say that, at once they followed Jesus, walking quietly behind him. Jesus knew that they were following, and he turned round and asked, Are you looking for any one? They answered, Master, where do you live? Jesus replied kindly, Come and see. So Jesus took them to the house where he was staying, and the two men remained with him that day. After that, they were almost always with him; for they knew that he was the Son of God.

One of these men, whose name was Andrew, had a brother called Peter, and wanted him to follow Christ. So he went to find him and to tell him the wonderful news. We have found the Messiah, he said. And then he took Peter to Jesus. From that moment he became a loving disciple of Jesus.

All these disciples—Peter, and John, and Andrew, and that other disciple—were fishermen. They were poor men, and had to work hard for their daily bread. They were obliged to go out in their ships, sometimes all day, and often all night, to catch fish. They were very fond of their ships; but, at a word from Jesus, they left them to follow him.

Did they think that Jesus could make them rich? It was not for this they wanted to be with him. They knew that Jesus was very poor, even poorer than themselves. He had no home of his own; but the disciples had homes where they might always live.

Yet they preferred to follow their Master; though by doing so they were often very weary and hungry. For sometimes it happened that such crowds followed Jesus, that they had not time to eat: and sometimes they were far from any town or village, and had a long way to go to buy bread. But sometimes people invited them into their own houses, and gave them food.

The day after Peter had joined the other disciples, Jesus was walking further on, to go to another place, when he met a man whose name was Philip. Come with me, Jesus said. Without a question and without a doubt, Philip followed him; for he, too, knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

"Come and See."

Philip had a friend called Nathanael, and he wanted to bring him to Christ. So he went to him, and said, We have found Jesus of Nazareth, who the Scriptures tell us is the Son of God. But Nathanael said, Nazareth is a very bad wicked place; can anything good come from there? Come and see, was Philip's answer.

So they went both together. And as Jesus saw Nathanael coming, he said, Here is one who is very truthful and honest.

Nathanael was surprised to hear Jesus say this, and he asked in wonder, How is it that you know me?

Jesus answered, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig-tree, I saw you. Nathanael did not doubt any longer. He

exclaimed, Master, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel!

Jesus said to him, Do you believe just because I said I saw you under the fig-tree? You shall see much greater wonders than these. One day you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. And so Nathanael also became a disciple.

not return alone. Some men are with him; they are the five disciples of whom you have already heard. Mary's heart must have been full of joy when she found that at last there were people who were beginning to believe in Jesus, and to call him the Son of God.

Now you are to read of the first miracle that he ever did. A miracle is any wonderful thing that is done that no man can do, but only God.

THE WATER TURNED INTO WINE AT CANA OF GALILEE.

Jesus as we have seen, had left his home in Nazareth to be baptized by John in the river Jordan. This had been done some weeks ago, and he had never been home since. But now he was going to return to Nazareth once more.

Two months have passed away, and once again he is in the little town where he had lived for so many years. But he does

In a house a few miles away from Nazareth there was a wedding, and the mother of Jesus was there. In that country a grand feast was always given at the time of a marriage, and this feast often lasted several days. Jesus was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage feast, and they went.

The people who gave the feast were poor, and they could not afford much wine; so it happened that after a little while it was all gone. What were they to do to get more?

The mother of Jesus knew that there was one sitting at the table who could help them, and so she just simply said to her blessed Son, They have no wine. But Jesus answered her, What have I to do with you in this matter? The proper time is not yet come for me to work.

Jesus always waited his Father's time, and not one moment before the right time would he do anything. He was as patient in waiting as he was patient in love and in suffering.

Mary felt quite sure that he was going to help them, so she turned to the servants, and said to them, Whatsoever he tells you to do, do it at once.

There were some large stone jars in the room, used for holding water. Jesus said unto the servants, Fill those water-pots with water. And they filled them quite full, up to the very top. Then Jesus said, Now pour out some in a cup, and take it to the ruler of the feast.

More than Enough for the Guests.

The servants did as they were told; and when the ruler of the feast had tasted it he found that it was no longer water, but wine —the very best wine he had ever tasted.

But how could that be? Jesus had changed into wine all the water that was in those large stone jars. So now there was enough, and more than enough, for all the guests.

The ruler of the feast could not understand where this wine, that was so much better than what they had been drinking, had come from. So he called the master of the house, and said to him, Why did you not give us this good wine before?

But the master of the house did not know how it had come; he only knew that all he had was gone. But the servants knew all about it, and now they told the whole story: how Jesus had made them fill the great stone jars with water, and how he had turned all the water into wine.

The people were very much astonished at the wonderful thing their Lord had done; and it made them believe all the more firmly that he was the Son of God. And this is why Jesus did miracles; to show his power and glory, and to show people that he was the Christ. Yet in spite of the wonderful things he did, many people would not believe in him.

Jesus at the Passover.

Very soon after the first miracle, Jesus went to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. You remember what a very great number of people used to flock to the holy city to keep this yearly feast. They came from all parts; from places a long way off, and even from other countries.

The city was crowded. Every street, every house was full; and hundreds of people had to make for themselves little tents of mats and branches of trees, to shelter them during the night because there was no room for them in any house.

Then, besides all the many people, there were hundreds and hundreds of cattle, sheep and oxen, driven into the city for sacrifice, and doves and pigeons too, were brought in great numbers; for these birds were what the poor offered to God in sacrifice—those who could not afford to offer a sheep or a lamb.

You may imagine how bright, and busy, and noisy it was in the streets of Jerusalem at that time; for it was a time of rejoicing, and of thanking God for past mercies.

So Jesus went into the temple to join in the solemn services there. The temple was a most beautiful building, far grander than anything you or I have ever seen. But what a sight met his eye!

The grand entrance-court of God's house was full of cattle, and crowded with men who were buying and selling them! Other men, with cages full of pigeons and doves, offering them for sale! There were other men sitting before tables, on which were piled up heaps of money; these people were called money-changers. And all the noise of the men's voices, of the sheep bleating, and of the oxen lowing, could be distinctly heard in the inner part of the temple, where the services were going on.

Four hundred years before, it had been prophesied—or foretold—in the Scriptures that one day the Lord would suddenly come into his temple, to cleanse and to purify it. That time had now come.

THE MONEY-CHANGERS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE.

Jesus was very angry at all he saw. He could not bear that his Father's house should be so dishonored; and in his holy anger he made a scourge, or whip, of small cords to chase out all those who were so profaning it.

First he drove out all the sheep and the oxen, and those who were selling them. Next he went to where the money-changers

were sitting, and he threw down all their tables, and upset the money that was piled up on each, leaving the men to grope about on the floor for all the coin which had been scattered, and was rolling about.

Then he said to those who sold the doves, Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a place for buying and selling. No one dared resist him. Though they hated him for what he had done, yet they felt in their hearts that he was right, and they were afraid of him.

When the proud priests and Pharisees heard what Jesus had done, they did not dare complain; for they, too, knew quite well that they had done wickedly to allow such deeds to take place in the holy temple.

They Call for His Authority.

Presently, however, when they had begun to recover themselves a little, some of the Jews came to him to ask by what authority he did these things. The old prophets had done many wonderful works, Samuel had brought down a storm of thunder and rain, Elijah had called fire from heaven to destroy his enemies, and they demanded of Jesus, if he was indeed the Messiah, that he would work some miracle as a sign, that they might see it and believe in him.

But Jesus would not do as they wished. Often after this he was pressed by the people to give them a sign, but he always made the same answer, that they were to look at his actions and see if they were the deeds of one who had come from God.

Instead of working any miracle, he now said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

The Jews answered, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?

They did not understand his words, but afterwards, when he had risen again from the dead, after lying in the grave for three days, his disciples remembered what he had said, and knew that he had been speaking, not of the material temple of stone, but of his own body. He meant to say that, even if that beautiful temple, to which men came from all parts of the world, were to be destroyed, it would not really matter, for that he had come to teach that each man might build in his own heart a temple for the Holy Spirit of God, which could not be destroyed even by death itself.

Whilst Jesus was at Jerusalem, he received one night a visit from a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

The Pharisees were the most important men amongst the Jews, for they were the religious teachers of the people, and they passed the greater part of their lives in studying the Law of God, and in laying down rules by which the more ignorant might know how it was to be understood.

Wanted to Be Seen of Men.

They gained the esteem of the people by making a great show of religion, but all their good works were done to be seen of men, and not from any true love to God. As was the custom in the East, they said their prayers standing, and this they did at the corners of the streets, so that all the passers-by could see them; and when they gave alms also, they took care to do it in such a way as to draw the attention of everyone to their generous action.

They were very strict about obedience to the exact words of the Law, but they acted for the most part in a manner that was entirely contrary to the true spirit of religion.

One of the commandments of the Law was that the tenth part of all possessions was to be offered to God, and the Pharisees

CHRIST TALKING TO NICODEMUS.

carried this out with such minuteness that they would go into their gardens and dig up some little plant, such as mint, in order that they might divide it into ten portions and offer the tenth to God; but the more important matters, such as justice, mercy, and faith, they were apt to neglect altogether.

How They Treated Parents.

Many of the rules, too, that they laid down for the guidance of the people were such as could only lead them into error, and they often explained the words of the Law in a way that was by no means in accordance with their true meaning.

For instance, it was written in the Law, Honor thy father and thy mother, and the Jews rightly held that no son who truly honored his father and mother would allow them to starve in their old age; but the Pharisees taught that if the son chose to say of his money, It is a gift—that is, if he preferred to give it either towards beautifying the temple, or for buying animals for sacrifice, or for building a synagogue, or for anything else that was considered to be the service of God—then he was not to be expected to do anything more for his father or his mother.

There were, however, some good and sincere men amongst the Pharisees, and one of those was the man who had come to visit Jesus by night. He had waited till it was dark, for he did not wish to be seen; but he had heard about Jesus, and desired to learn from him, feeling sure that he was a teacher come from God.

Jesus told him that he had indeed been sent by God, and had come to establish the kingdom of God upon earth, and he said that no one could enter into that kingdom except by beginning a new life. Twice over he repeated the solemn words, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Sent to Teach the Truth.

Then he went on to say that God had sent him into the world to teach the truth, and that those who loved the truth would believe in him and be saved, but that those who loved rather to remain in darkness, doing evil deeds, would perish. It would be as it was with the Israelites in the wilderness, who were saved by looking towards the brazen serpent.

That had happened long ago, when the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness from Egypt to the land of Canaan. They had murmured against the Lord, and he punished them by sending fiery serpents among them to destroy them. Then they cried to the Lord to deliver them, and the Lord told Moses, their leader, to make a serpent of brass and set it on a pole, that all the people might see it. If one of the fiery serpents had bitten any man, when he looked upon the serpent of brass he became healed of the wound. And so there was life for a look of faith.

So shall it be again, said Jesus, For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so shall the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA—THE WOMAN AT JACOB'S WELL—THE WATER OF LIFE—IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH—HATRED OF THE JEWS—HEALING THE SON OF A NOBLEMAN—CASTING OUT A DEVIL—WONDERFUL CURES—JESUS CALLS PETER AND ANDREW—DISCOURSES UPON THE LAW AND PROVIDENCE—A LESSON FROM BIRDS AND FLOWERS—HOUSE BUILT ON THE ROCK—A LEPER HEALED—THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED TO LIFE.

JESUS returned to the banks of the Jordan when the Feast of the Passover was ended, and there he continued for some time with his disciples, calling upon the people to repent of their sins and prepare for the kingdom of heaven. But before long there came to him the sad news that John had been seized by the soldiers of King Herod, and cast into prison. This Herod was not so wicked as his father, who had slain the little boys of Bethlehem, but he was far from being a good king, and when John told him that he also needed to repent of his sins, he was very angry, and shut him up in a gloomy dungeon from which he never came out alive.

The disciples of John went to Jesus and told him that their master had been cast into prison, and they said that unless he left that part of the country the same fate would doubtess overtake him also. Jesus yielded therefore to their entreaties, and determined to go and preach in the cities of Galilee, beginning first of all with the town of Nazareth, where he had been brought up.

Between the province of Judæa, where Jesus had been preaching, and the province of Galilee, which was at the north of the land of Israel, was a district called Samaria.

The people of Samaria were not of the same race as the Israelites. Hundreds of years before this time, the country had been conquered by the king of Assyria, who made the whole land desolate, and took away the children of Israel into captivity. Then, because there was no one left to dwell in the cities of Samaria, he brought some strange people to occupy them, who worshipped other gods, and when by-and-by the Israelites returned to their own home, they found these strangers settled in it.

They Could Not Agree.

This vexed them very much, and instead of making friends with the strangers, they regarded them as their deadly enemies. They could not get rid of them, but they did all they could to vex and annoy them, and the Samaritans in their turn did everything in their power to annoy the Jews.

One of the things that the Samaritans did was to build a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim, one of the mountains of Samaria, instead of going up to worship at the temple of Jerusalem, and they often refused to give any food or shelter to the men of Galilee when they passed through their country.

In consequence of this, the men of Galilee usually went far out of their way in order to avoid passing through Samaria, and the Jewish teachers taught that it was degrading to accept any service or even to buy food

JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

from a Samaritan. But Jesus would not carry on the quarrel. He loved all men, and instead of going out of his way to avoid the Samaritans he was glad to pass through their country.

He travelled on foot, as he always did, and it happened that one day at about noon he reached the town of Sychar, near which there was a well of water. The well had seats all round it, and was shaded by a roof which kept the water cool by protecting it from the fierce rays of the eastern sun.

It was now summer, and Jesus, being wearied with his journey, sat resting upon the well, while his disciples went into the town to buy food. He wished for some of the fresh, cool water, but the well was deep, and he had nothing to draw with. Presently he saw a Samaritan woman coming towards him with a pitcher in her hand, and asked her to give him to drink.

She was astonished that he should expect any kindness from her, and said, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?

What He Answered.

Jesus answered, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

She did not understand his meaning, but she soon perceived that he was a great prophet, and then she asked him to answer a question that had often perplexed her. There had long been a dispute between her countrymen and the Jews as to whether God could be worshipped in the temple on Mount Gerizim, or only in the temple at Jerusalem, and she wanted to know which party was in the right. She said, Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus answered her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither on this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. It was the same thing that he had said to the Jews at the feast, only a short time before, that the true worship of God does not consist in going to this place or to that, but in entering into communion with the Spirit of God.

He Tells Who He Is.

The woman said, I know that the Messiah is coming, who is called the Christ. When he is come, he will tell us all things.

Then said Jesus, I that speak unto thee am he.

At these unexpected words, the woman put down her pitcher and ran back into the city to call her friends and neighbors.

While the woman was telling her neighbors to come to Jesus, the disciples tried to make their Master take some food. Master, eat, they said to him. But Jesus was not hungry now.

He had been both hungry, and thirsty, and tired before; but he cared so much for the poor woman to whom he had been speaking, and he wanted so much to make her forsake her sins and love his Father, that he forgot all about his food, and he did not want any now. So when the disciples begged him to eat, he said to them, I have meat to eat that you do not know about.

Has any one brought him any food to eat? The disciples asked each other, wondering. Then Jesus explained to them what he meant. My meat is to do my Father's will, and to finish his work. More than his food, more than his rest, more than his life,

he loved to finish his Father's will at all times.

And now the Samaritans came flocking to him out of the city; and as Jesus sat on the well he taught them.

As they listened to him they forgot he was a Jew; and, as they heard his gracious words, they longed to have him always with them, and they begged him to stay with them. So Jesus remained two days in the city.

As he preached, a great many people believed in him. Some believed because of what the woman had told them when she said, he has told me all the things that I have ever done.

And many more believed in him because of what they heard him say; and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves, and know that he is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

After leaving the city of the Samaritans, Jesus continued his journey to Nazareth, the town where he had been brought up; and when the Sabbath day came round, he went into the synagogue, according to his usual custom.

Reading the Sacred Roll.

Besides the temple at Jerusalem, where the Jews met together from time to time to worship God, they had in most towns a synagogue or meeting-place, where they assembled every Sabbath day.

The sacred books of the Law and the Prophets were written on long rolls of parchment, and any one who chose might come forward to read the portion appointed for the day, and speak a few words to the people. On this Sabbath, Jesus rose up, and taking into his hands the roll of the prophet Isaiah, he opened it, and read these words: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

He wound up the roll again, and sitting down in the raised seat reserved for whoever had something to say to the people, he began to tell them that these words, which had been spoken so long ago, were now about to be fulfilled. He said that the kingdom of heaven was going to be established upon earth, and that whoever would follow him, might have a place in it.

All Fixed Their Eyes on Him.

He told them, too, that this kingdom was not one in which the rich and the great and the powerful would have all the advantages, but that those who were called to it were especially the poor and the despised, the weary and the heavy-laden.

As he spoke, the eyes of all the congregation were fastened upon him. They all knew him, for till lately he had been living in their midst; and they said one to another, Is not this Joseph's son? as they heard with wonder the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.

But as Jesus went on to tell them more about the kingdom, they were not so well pleased, for he said that all men might enter into it—not only the Jews, but people of other nations also, whom the Jews hated and despised, calling them all alike by the name of Gentiles or strangers. He reminded them, moreover, of two stories from the history of their own country, which showed that, even in the time past, the Gentiles had sometimes been more ready to accept the gifts of God than the Jews themselves.

The first story was about the great prophet Elijah. He lived in the reign of Ahab, a wicked king, whose sins were so great that, as a punishment, the heaven was dried up and no rain fell for three years and six months, so that there arose a mighty famine in the land.

Elijah left the land of Israel, and journeyed into Phenicia till he came to Zarephath, a city of the Gentiles. As he drew near to the gate of the city, he saw a poor widow woman gathering sticks, and asked her to give him something to eat. But even here the famine was very severe, and she answered him, I have but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, and now I am gathering a few sticks that I may make a cake and cook it for me and my son, that we may eat it and then die.

She Shared her Last Meal.

But Elijah said, Verily, I say unto thee, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

When the poor woman heard these words, she received him gladly, and shared with him the food of which she had expected to make her last meal; and behold, it was as the prophet had said—the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the oil fail, until at last the rain poured down again in torrents, and the famine was at an end.

The other story was about Elisha, another great prophet. It happened in his time that the Israelites were at war with the Syrians, who conquered them, and took away as one of their prisoners a little Jewish girl, whom they gave as a slave to the wife of Naaman, their captain.

Now Naaman was a brave man and a great general, but he was afflicted with a terrible disease which no one could cure. But when the little servant-girl heard of it she said, If my master would go to the prophet who is in Israel, he would recover him of his disease.

So Naaman set out, with a number of his servants, and came to the prophet Elisha, who told him to go and bathe himself seven times in the river Jordan. This he did, and after the seventh time the disease left him altogether, and he was quite well.

These two stories Jesus told to the people of Nazareth to show them that many of the Gentiles were ready to be taught, and to listen gladly to the good news of the kingdom of God. There were many widows in Israel, he said, in the days of Elijah the prophet, but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save only to a woman of Zarephath, in the land of the Gentiles. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, but none of them was cleansed save Naaman the Syrian.

The Nobleman's Son.

The people of Nazareth had gradually become more and more angry, and when Jesus spoke as if the Gentiles were as near to the kingdom of heaven as themselves, they could no longer contain their indignation. With one accord they rose up, and having thrust him out of the synagogue, they dragged him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But Jesus avoided their fury, and passing through the midst of them, he went his way.

The people of Nazareth were too ignorant and too selfish to receive the good news he had to bring them. He therefore left them, and went away to Capernaum. On the way he halted at the little village of Cana, where he had been present at the marriage feast, and had changed the water into wine.

Now it happened that in the city of Capernaum, which was not many miles distant, there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick and ready to die. It was in vain that the sorrow-stricken father sent for all the best physicians that could be obtained—the boy only became worse and worse.

Then, in his distress, he remembered how some little time ago there had come to the town a stranger who had cured many that were sick and afflicted, and who had also wrought a wondrous miracle in the village of Cana. He began to inquire where Jesus could be found, and when he heard that he was again at Cana, he determined to go and ask for his help in this time of trouble.

An Anxious Father.

He set out without delay, and when he had come to Jesus, he besought him with many entreaties that he would return with him to Capernaum and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus did not go with him, for that was not needed, but by a single word he turned the poor father's sorrow into joy. He said to him, Thy son liveth, and the nobleman believed his word, and went back calm and happy, feeling sure that all was well.

Meanwhile, in his house at Capernaum, there was great rejoicing, for at the very moment when Jesus spoke the words, Thy son liveth, the boy began to recover.

The nobleman was one of the courtiers of King Herod, and as he was a rich man he had many slaves, for in those days it was not thought wrong to buy and sell human beings into slavery. He was a kind master, and his slaves who loved him, and who had sorrowed with him in his distress, were eager to tell him the good news of his son's recovery.

They set out to meet him the next morning, and ran towards him, as soon as he came in sight, saying, Thy son liveth.

Then the father inquired at what hour he began to amend, and they said, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him.

It was at the very hour at which Jesus had spoken the words, Thy son liveth; and when the father told his household how the word of Jesus had been able to cure his son, they also believed in the great Prophet that had arisen in Israel.

The town of Capernaum was built upon the shore of the beautiful Sea of Galilee, and all round it was a country so rich and lovely that it was sometimes called the garden of the Lord. Flowers blossomed in the fields and gardens, leafy trees gave a pleasant shelter from the fierce heat, and the lake, whose waters were clear as crystal, reflected back a thousand colors as it sparkled and rippled in the sunlight.

A Town on the Lake Shore.

Capernaum was the home of Peter and Andrew and Philip; and now that he had been rejected by the people of Nazareth, Jesus resolved that he also would make it his home, so far as he had one. From this time he called Capernaum his own city, and when he was there he lodged in the house of Peter, who was a married man and had a house of his own.

It was a busy place, for the lake was full of fish, and a great number of the inhabitants were occupied in catching the fish, and in packing them up and sending them away for sale. It was also near to the town of Tiberias, where King Herod held his court, and to four of the great roads that led from one part of the country to another. These all met near the Lake of Galilee, so that the town was constantly full of strangers passing through it.

On the first Sabbath after he had come to Capernaum, Jesus entered into the synagogue and taught the people. They listened with astonishment as he told them the good news of the kingdom of God; but presently he was interrupted by a voice which seemed to come from among the people, and which cried out, What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God.

In those days people were sometimes afflicted with a terrible disease. Unclean spirits or devils took possession of their bodies, and obliged them to do whatever they required. When a man was possessed with a devil, he had no longer control over his own actions; sometimes the devil threw him into the water and sometimes into the fire, sometimes it made him blind and sometimes dumb, and often it spoke through his mouth with words that were not his.

The Devil Went out of Him.

The voice that had interrupted Jesus, proceeded from a man who was possessed with an unclean spirit. Jesus paused in his teaching, and fastening his eyes upon him, he said to the devil, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

Then the poor man was convulsed with a terrible struggle. For some minutes he lay upon the ground, crying out and foaming at the mouth, but presently all was still. The devil had gone out of him, and when Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, he was quite well, and restored to his right mind.

All the people marvelled greatly, and they said, What is this? With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

When the service of the synagogue was ended, Jesus went home with Simon Peter; but on reaching the house, they found that Peter's wife's mother was stricken with a fever, and could not rise from her bed. Jesus at once went to her, and taking her by the hand, he raised her up. Immediately her strength returned to her, and she rose and set food before them.

The news of this wonderful cure, and of the healing of the poor man possessed by the devil soon spread through Capernaum, and all who had friends that were sick or afflicted, longed to bring them to Jesus, that he might lay his hands upon them.

Wonderful Cures.

But it was the Sabbath day, and the Jews were very particular about the keeping of the Sabbath—no one was allowed to travel more than a certain distance, and no burden of any sort might be carried. They were obliged therefore to wait until the setting of the sun, by which time the Sabbath was considered to be over.

Never before had the sun gone down upon such a scene as was witnessed that summer evening at Capernaum. All along the street leading to the house of Peter were laid beds occupied by poor sick people; and besides these was a crowd of others, who were suffering from all kinds of diseases and infirmities, some of them crying out with pain or madness.

One alone amongst them all was calm and well, even he of whom the prophet said, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses. He passed up and down among the sad crowd, and as he laid his hands first on one and then on another, the poor man or woman became perfectly well, and departed, glorifying God.

It was late that night before Jesus could go to rest, and even then he was unable to

"FOLLOW ME AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN."

sleep. A great while before it was day, he rose up and, leaving the city, departed to a desert place that he might be alone with his heavenly Father.

Jesus loved all men and all things. He loved to look at the flowers in their beauty, at the cornfields ripening for the harvest, at the birds flying above his head. He loved, too, to watch the occupations of men, to look at the sower sowing his seed, at the children playing their games in the streets, at the fishermen unloading their boats, heaped with silver-coated fish. But most of all he loved to be quite alone in some solitary place, that he might think about God, and pray to the Father in heaven.

He was in a Desert Place.

When the day dawned in Capernaum, and the city began to awake, many of those who had not been healed on the previous evening, came to the house of Peter to seek for Jesus, but he was not there.

Then Peter and some of his friends went to look for him, and at last they found him in the desert place, and told him that all men were seeking for him and were anxious that he should remain amongst them. But Jesus answered, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.

He agreed, however, to remain one day longer in Capernaum, and returned thither with Peter. When they had come to the shore, Jesus saw John, the son of Zebedee, whom he had brought back with him from the banks of the Jordan. He was in a boat with his father Zebedee and his brother James and some hired servants, mending their nets, for they were fishermen.

Jesus went up to them and told them that he was going to preach in some of the other cities of Galilee, and he said to the two brothers, Follow me. They arose immediately, left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Later on in the day, he saw Peter and Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they also were fishermen, and he said unto them, Follow me. Then they in like manner arose, left all, and followed him.

The next day, Jesus again went down to the shore to teach the people, and as they pressed round him to hear his words, he entered into the boat of Simon, and begged him to push it out a little from the shore, that there might be some small space between himself and the multitude. Then he sat down in the boat and began to teach, and the people stood or sat upon the shore and listened to his words.

When he had finished speaking, the multitude went away to their own homes, and Jesus said to Peter, Launch out now into the deep sea, and let down your nets for a draught.

Peter answered, Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net.

A Great Draught of Fishes.

This he did, and now all the fish in the lake seemed eager to be caught. In a few moments the net was filled so full that it was in danger of breaking, and Peter had to beckon to his brother and some friends who were in another boat, to come and help them. Both the boats were soon so heavily laden with fish that they sank down quite low in the water.

When Peter saw that wonderful sight, he fell upon his knees at the feet of his Master, and cried out, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

He was astonished and overcome at witnessing the power of Jesus, and he felt that

he, a sinful man, was not worthy to be the chosen friend of one who could do such mighty works. But Jesus said to him, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

After this, Jesus left Capernaum with his disciples, and passed through many of the cities of Galilee, healing the sick and afflicted, and telling the people that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Great multitudes followed him from place to place, and when he saw the people gathered round him, he felt that the time had come when he must teach them what was meant by the kingdom of heaven of which he had been speaking so much. It was something quite new that he had to tell them, something grander and nobler and higher than even the best thoughts of the best men who had ever yet lived—so high indeed that many would be incapable of appreciating its grandeur and its beauty, and would turn away and reject it.

What He Came For.

It was a very solemn moment in the life of Jesus, and before speaking to the people he went away alone to a mountain apart, that he might pray and hold communion with God. Not only to the multitude of Galilean peasants was he going to speak, but to all men who have since lived, or who will live to the end of time.

He had told his disciples that after a certain interval they might bring the multitude to join him on the mountain side, and at the appointed time they gathered round him. Then he opened his mouth and began to teach them, and at the first words that he uttered a hush of astonishment fell upon the listening crowd.

Then he went on to tell them that they were the children of God, the Father in heaven, who is good and kind to all, even to the wicked and the unthankful, and that they must strive to become perfect as he is perfect, and to glorify their heavenly Father by letting the light of their good works shine before men on the earth.

He said that he had come, not to destroy the Law of Moses and the words of the prophets, which from their youth up they had been taught to obey, but to fulfil them—to teach men how to understand and obey them in a higher and truer sense than ever before. Not only were they to refrain from doing the wicked actions which the Law forbade, but even the very thoughts of their hearts must be pure and free from sin.

How to Treat Our Enemies.

He told them, moreover, that if God was their Father and the Father of all, then all men must be their brethren. The old Law had said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, and Thou shalt take an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But now they were to love even their enemies, to do good to those that hated them, to bless those that cursed them, to pray for those that treated them badly.

If anyone did them an injury, they were to bear it patiently, and return good for evil; if anyone asked them for something, they were to give it gladly. Above all, they were to judge mercifully, despairing of no man, condemning no man, extending their love and their kindness to all, even as their heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

With regard to their worship of God, they were to be very careful to avoid the sin of the hypocrites, who made long prayers and gave alms in public places that they might have the praise of men. The prayer which God approved, he told them, was the secret

and sincere prayer of the heart, and in order that they might know how to approach God, he taught them a prayer which from that day to this has been used by men of all nations and tongues. It is the first prayer that little children learn, and the last that old men say upon their dying beds. It is called the Lord's prayer.

A Lesson from the Birds.

Then he went on to say that, when they had prayed to God, and asked him to provide their daily food and enable them to do their daily duty, they need have no anxious thoughts concerning the future. Behold, he said, the birds of the air. They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Be not, therefore, anxious, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Lastly, he told them that whatsoever things they desired that men should do unto them, even so must they do unto others, and that this was the true obedience to the Law and the Prophets. This, he said, was the only path by which they could enter the kingdom of heaven, and he bade them beware of false prophets who would come and tell them that they might walk thither upon a broader and easier road.

Enter ye in, he said, by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. But narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

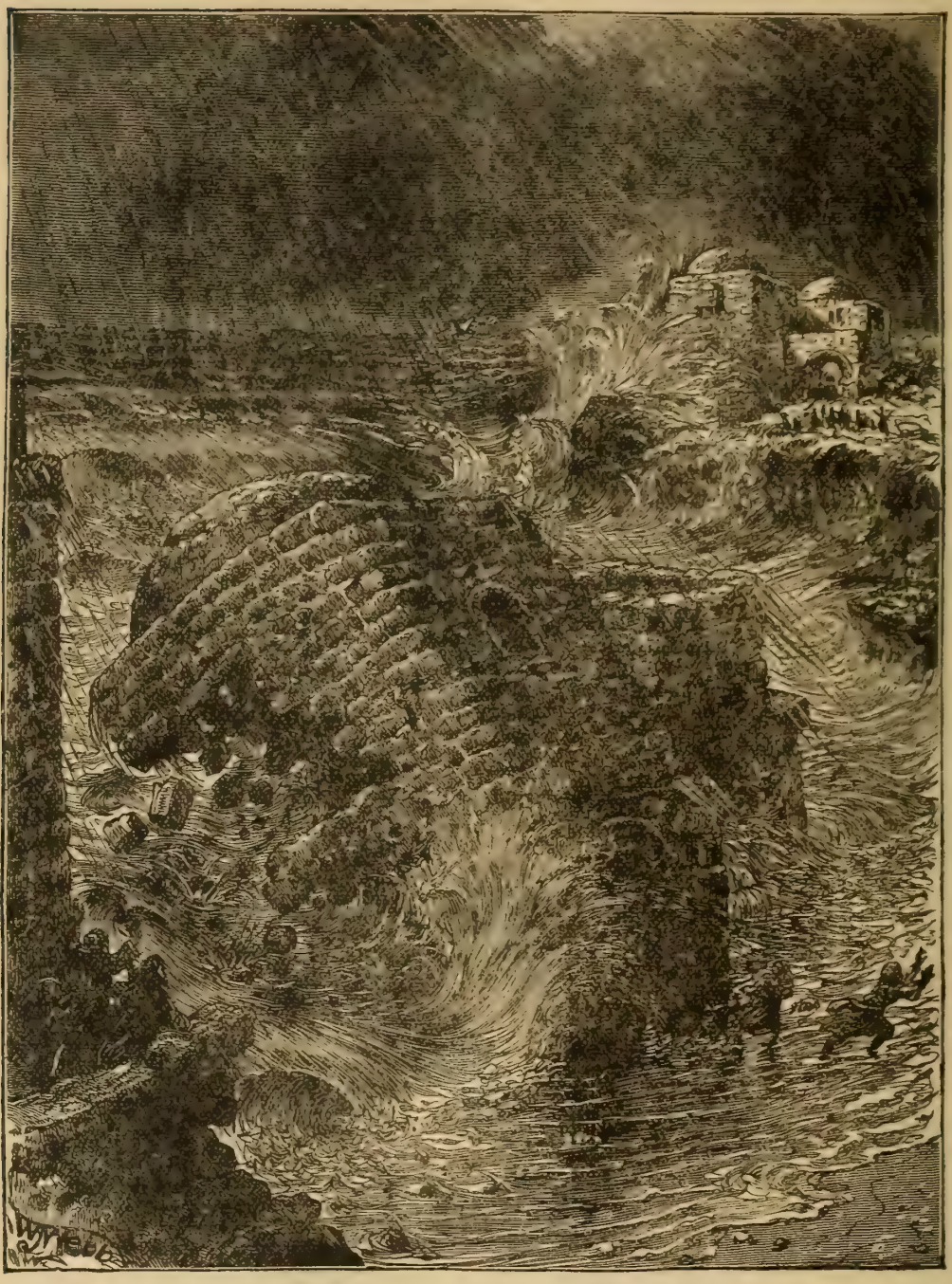
And then, in order to impress it still further upon their minds, he told them a story of two men who both desired to build a house. One thought only of doing what was easy and pleasant, and he built his house on some soft sandy ground by the sea-shore, where there was no difficulty about making a foundation. The other went farther away from the sea, and built his house upon a piece of rocky ground, where the foundations were hard to dig, but when they were made they were strong.

The Sandy Foundation.

Everyone, therefore, said Jesus, that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock.

And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.

The multitude listened with astonishment to the teaching of Jesus. He teacheth with authority, they said one to another, and not as do the Scribes. It was a new doctrine, unlike anything they had ever heard before, and it seemed to raise them into a higher region of purity and holiness. They could not bear to lose sight of the great Teacher, who spoke as no man had ever yet spoken.



FALL OF THE HOUSE BUILT ON SAND.

and when he came down from the mountain, they still followed after him.

It was soon after this, that as he was about to enter into a certain city, behold, there came a leper, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

A leper was a man who was afflicted with a very dreadful disease that affected his skin, and made it horrible even to look at him. The disease could, moreover, be easily conveyed from one person to another, and for these reasons, those who were afflicted with it were obliged to live apart, far away from all other people. No one would touch them, or even go near them, and if they had occasion to enter a town, they were obliged to cover their heads and faces, and cry out, Unclean, unclean! So that everyone might avoid them.

Sent Him to the Priest.

But Jesus was not afraid to touch the poor leper who came and threw himself at his feet. He took him by the hand and raised him up, and in answer to his cry, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, he said, I will; be thou clean.

As he spoke the words, the whole appearance of the man changed. The disease left him, and his skin became like that of other people.

The Jewish Law, which had been given to the people by Moses, commanded that, if ever a leper recovered from his disease, he must go and show himself to the priest before he could be allowed to live again amongst other men; and if the priest were satisfied that it was a real recovery, then the man was to offer a sacrifice of a pair of birds. Jesus said to the man whom he had cured, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded.

He was now on his way back to Capernaum, and as he approached the city, there met him a number of the chief men of the place. They had come to him on behalf of a certain centurion who lived in Capernaum, and who was now in great trouble. One of his slaves, whom he loved as dearly as his own son, was at the point of death, and he begged that some of the chief men of the city would go to Jesus and beseech him to cure the slave.

The centurion was an officer in command of a hundred soldiers, a Roman, belonging to the army of King Herod, and it was a strange thing that the Jewish rulers should trouble themselves about the illness of his slave. As a rule, the Romans and the Jews —the conquerors and the conquered—were far from cherishing any kindly feelings one towards the other, although they were compelled to live side by side.

The Centurion's Servant.

But this centurion was a man of larger heart than the rest, and as it was his lot to live amongst the Jews, he had determined to do his utmost to show them kindness, and gain their good will. He had even built a beautiful synagogue for them, and in many other ways had tried to serve them.

The Jews were therefore concerned when they heard of his distress, and hastened to take his message to Jesus, who immediately answered, I will go and heal him.

But before he could reach the house of the centurion, he was met by the Roman himself, who had come with some of his friends to beg that he would not give himself so much trouble. He had heard how Jesus had cured the nobleman's son without seeing him, by merely speaking a word, and he thought that sickness and pain were spirits, who were obliged to obey the voice

of Jesus, and to come or go as he desired.

He said, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, neither thought I myself worthy to come to thee; but speak the word only, and my slave shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my slave, Do this, and he doeth it.

The Man was Cured.

No one had ever yet addressed such words to Jesus. The Roman centurion was the first to perceive that he was the Lord of all, and when Jesus heard these words fall from his lips, he marvelled greatly, and turning to the people who were following him, he said, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then he said to the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.

So the centurion departed to his house, and at the same moment his slave became well.

Jesus again left Capernaum, early the next day, for there were many other towns that he desired to visit.

He sailed over the beautiful Sea of Galilee, and landed again some way farther down the coast. Then he left the shore, and made towards the city of Nain, which was at some little distance, followed by his disciples and a great mutitude of people.

It was a brilliant summer's day. The sun was shining in the clear blue sky, the birds were singing amongst the branches, the waters of the Sea of Galilee were sparkling and rippling, everything seemed to speak of happiness and joy.

But presently, as they drew nearer towards the city, a wail of sorrow smote upon their ears, and soon they saw a sad procession of mourners coming forth from the gates.

In front was carried a bier, or open coffin, on which lay the dead body of a young man. Next came the mother weeping bitterly, and behind there followed a number of other persons, who were weeping and lamenting. For them the beauty of the scene around them had but little charm, their eyes were blinded by their tears, for they were carrying out the young man to bury him beyond the gates of the city.

Jesus stopped the procession and asked who it was that they were going to bury, and they told him that the young man who had died was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

Restored to his Mother.

The heart of Jesus was filled with compassion, and turning to the poor mother, who was weeping so bitterly, he said to her, Weep not.

Then he went nearer, and touched the bier. Those who were carrying it stood still, and a hush fell upon all as he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

The young man was dead, his spirit had already left him, but at the call of the Lord it came back.

He that was dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother, who had thought that he was gone from her for ever.

Then a great fear fell upon all those who saw the wonderful sight.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JESUS DINES IN THE HOUSE OF A PHARISEE—MARY MAGDALENE AND HER BOX OF OINTMENT—CURE OF THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY—A CLUSTER OF PARABLES—WHAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE—STORY OF THE PRODIGAL—PUBLICANS AND SINNERS—A WOMAN HEALED—THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS—THE TROUBLED SEA CALMED—THE MAN POSSESSED OF DEVILS—FOLLOWED BY A MULTITUDE—THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

GREAT interest was awakened by the wonderful works of Christ. Up to this time the Pharisees had, for the most part, taken very little notice of him, but after the miracle that had been wrought at Nain, they began to pay more attention to the new Teacher, and one of the Pharisees, whose name was Simon, invited him to dine at his house.

He was not, however, like Nicodemus, who had honored Jesus and wished to learn from him; and though he asked him to his house, he did not receive him with any real kindness of feeling. Even the most ordinary courtesy was neglected, such as that of having water poured over his hands and feet.

In the countries of the East, there is much less privacy than amongst ourselves, and in consequence of the heat, the feast in the Pharisee's house was held in a room with open doors, into which anyone might freely enter from the street. It happened, therefore, that many of those who had been with Jesus followed him into the house that they might still be near him, and listen to his words.

Amongst these was a woman called Mary, who came from the town of Magdala. She had led a wicked life, and as she stood in the presence of Jesus, she became filled with a sense of her own sinfulness, and of the distance that separated her from his life of purity and holiness.

She began to weep bitterly, and as she wept, her tears fell down upon the feet of Jesus, for in those days the guests at a feast reclined upon couches with their feet away from the table.

Seeing this, she bent down and began to wipe the feet of Jesus, with her long hair, while her whole heart was filled with a burning desire to turn away from her past sins, and to lead a new and better life. She longed to find some means of showing her love and her reverence for him who had wrought this change in her, and as she had nothing else to offer him, she took a box of fragrant ointment, and poured it out upon his feet.

The Two Debtors.

The Pharisee saw what was done, and in his heart he was much displeased, for he said within himself, If this man were a prophet, he would know what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.

Jesus knew what was passing in his mind, and in order to show him how wrong he was, he began to tell him of a certain man who had two debtors. The one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave

MARY ANOINTING THE FEET OF CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE.

them both. Tell me, therefore, said Jesus, which of them will love him most?

The Pharisee answered, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave most.

Then said Jesus, Thou hast rightly judged, And, turning to the woman, he went on to explain that she was like the first of the two debtors to whom much had been forgiven.

Seest thou this woman? he said, I entered into thine house; thou givest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since the time that I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

And then to Mary herself he said, Thy sins are forgiven. Go in peace.

In the House of Peter.

After having spent some time in going from one to another of the cities of Galilee, teaching and working miracles, Jesus returned once more to his own city of Capernaum.

He went as usual to the house of Peter, but he was unable to obtain any rest, for the people had heard of his return, and came flocking to the house. Soon there was no room left, even for standing, but still the multitude crowded round the door.

Amongst those who had been unable to obtain an entrance, was a poor man who was sick of the palsy. This disease prevented him from having any use of his limbs, and he would have been unable to reach the place, had it not been for the kindness of four of his friends, who carried him, stretched upon a mattress.

Their disappointment at being unable to bring him into the presence of Jesus was very great, but presently they thought of a means by which they could accomplish their purpose.

The roofs of eastern houses are usually flat, and as the people like to walk upon them in the cool of the evening, there are steps outside the house, by which it is easy to get to the top. They are, moreover, very slightly built, and the four friends had no great difficulty in removing some of the tiles from the roof of Peter's house, and lowering the mattress into the room in which Jesus was teaching the people.

Instead of being annoyed at the interruption, Jesus was pleased at what they had done, and he said to the sick man, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.

Now it happened that there were certain of the Scribes and Pharisees sitting there, who began to reason in their hearts, and say, This man speaketh blasphemies. Who can forgive sins but God only?

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and he answered them, saying, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? Is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?

The Man Walked Away.

In other words, Is it easier to cure the body or to cure the soul? The cure of the body could be seen by all, the cure of the soul could only be known to God; but in order that all might perceive that he had power to heal the body, and might believe that he was able also to heal the soul, Jesus, said to the man sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house.

As he spoke, a new life seemed to fill the veins of the sick man. A moment before,

he had been stretched on his couch, unable to move; now, at the command of Jesus, he arose, took up his bed, and went away to his house.

The crowd watched him with amazement, and they departed glorifying God, who had given such power unto men.

As soon as he was able, Jesus left the house, for he liked far better to teach the people out of doors, with the blue sky stretching far above his head, and the fresh breeze rustling round him. He went down to the sea-shore, and seeing a boat moored there, he entered into it, and began to speak.

He said that he would tell them a story of a sower, who once went forth in the spring-time to sow his field. He scattered the seeds over it, but it happened that some of them fell upon the pathway, where they were left exposed, and the birds of the air came and pecked them up.

Other seeds fell upon rocky ground, where there was but little depth of earth, and though they soon sprang up, yet they had so little root that they were quickly withered by the heat of the sun.

The Good Ground.

Again, some of the seeds fell among thorn-bushes, and the thorns grew up and occupied all the gronnd, so that there was no room for the seeds to grow. But some of them fell on good ground, and they sprang up and yielded fruit. Where one seed had been cast into the ground, there grew an ear of grain full of seeds, sometimes with thirty, sometimes sixty, sometimes a hundred on one stalk.

Afterwards the disciples asked Jesus what was the meaning of the story, and he told them that it was a picture, or a parable, of the kingdom of God. Many different kinds of people are called to enter that kingdom, and the seed is the word which calls them into it. But some hear the call without attention; those are the people whose seeds were sown upon the pathway.

Others listen gladly for a time, but afterwards, when trouble or persecution comes, they fall away, like the blades withered by the heat of the sun. In the case of others, again, the cares and riches and pleasures of this world occupy the heart, just as the thorn-bushes filled the ground, and leave no room for other thoughts. But some there are, men of honest and good hearts, who listen to the word and understand it, and who bring forth fruit with patience.

Sowing Tares.

Jesus spoke another parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this.

The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he

knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Then Jesus spoke another parable, and said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Still further he talked to them, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

And with many such parables he spoke the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable he did not speak unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Again he said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which

THE ENEMY SOWING TARES BY NIGHT.

FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?

They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore, every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

The Hated Tax Collectors.

Amongst the Jews at this time, there was a class of people who were more hated and despised than any others These were the publicans or tax-gatherers. The Jews were obliged to pay taxes to their Roman conquerors, and much as they hated the Romans, they hated still more those of their countrymen who helped them by collecting the taxes for them.

Besides this, the tax-gatherers deserved, in many cases, to be looked down upon, for they were in the habit of making an unfair profit, by charging more than the right amount of the tax, and keeping the remainder for themselves.

For these reasons, the Jews were accustomed to speak of "publicans and sinners," as if the two words meant the same thing, and they considered that no one who had any respect for his own character would have any intercourse with such persons.

But Jesus knew that in all conditions of life there were some who would gladly obey his call, and he had observed one of the publicans, a man named Matthew, who was, he perceived, worthy to become his friend and disciple. He passed by as Matthew was sitting at his work, and said to him, Follow me. And Matthew at once rose up, and left his books and papers, and followed him.

He knew that Jesus would soon again be leaving Capernaum, and he was willing to go with him to the end of the world, if need be, but he desired first to say farewell to his old friends, and gathered them all together to a feast at his house.

Jesus had promised to be present, and when the time came, he went to the house of Matthew with his disciples, where he found himself in the midst of a number of publicans and others who had broken some of the commandments of the Law, and who were therefore called sinners. None but such as these would come to a feast in the publican's house.

The Foolish Prodigal.

When Jesus looked round upon these poor, despised, and sinful people, his heart was filled with compassion, and he longed to convince them of the love of God for even such poor outcasts as they were, and to assure them, that if they would repent of their sins, God would be willing to forgive them, and receive them into his kingdom.

He told them a parable of a certain man who had two sons. The younger son became tired of his home, and asked his father to give him the money that would come to

him at his death, that he might go away and travel in foreign lands.

The father yielded to his wishes, and the son went away to a far country, and had soon spent all the money in riotous living. When it was all gone, he began to be in want, for there was a famine in that land, and he became so poor that he was obliged to hire himself out as a swineherd. Even then he was often so hungry that he would gladly have eaten the swine's food, but no man gave unto him. Then he thought to himself, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father.

This he did; and while he was yet a great way off, the father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

The publicans and sinners did not need to ask what the parable meant. They knew that

THE BEGGAR LAZARUS AT THE RICH MAN'S GATE.

the prodigal son represented just such people as themselves, and that God was the kind father who was so willing to forgive his son as soon as he repented of his evil ways.

The Rich Man and the Beggar.

Then Jesus told them the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who lived on the choicest food every day. His home was a splendid residence, rich carpets covering its floors and beautiful gems adorning its walls. The princely occupant rode in his elegant chariots, behind magnificent horses. It is not said that he was a very bad man, but simply that he lived a life of ease and self-indulgence and forgetfulness of God. He did not care for the sorrows and wants of a poor man such as Lazarus, who sat at his gate and was glad to make a meal on the pieces which were taken from his table after he had indulged his appetite. Lazarus was not only poor, but very sick with a diseased body.

The dogs were his companions, and we read that they licked the poor man's sores as he sat at the gate. Perhaps he was unable even to walk to the gate, but was carried there every day by sympathizing friends. He desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, but it is not stated that he received enough even of these to supply his wants.

The condition of Lazarus in this life formed a marked contrast to that of the rich man. At last the beggar's sufferings were ended, by death coming to his relief, and Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. There was very little display at his funeral; he filled only a pauper's grave; indeed, the Scripture makes no mention of his funeral. The palaces of the new Jerusalem, the raptures of heaven, and the enjoyment of the celestial banquet formed a marked contrast to his former sad experiences of suffering and woe.

The rich man also died and had a grand and costly funeral, for the Scripture states that he was buried. But in the future state, we are told that he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and, as he looked up, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. So great was the punishment for which he suffered for his sins.

The Beggar is Made Happy.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received your good things. You had the riches, pleasures, and honors of the world, while Lazarus received evil things—poverty, suffering, sickness, neglect and hunger. But now Lazarus, who trusted in and served God, is comforted, and you, who lived a life of ease, indulgence, and forgetfulness of God, are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who would pass from us to you cannot, neither can they pass to us who would come from you.

His prayers for himself will not be heard, so he desires that Lazarus may be sent to his father's house, that he may warn his five brethren to repent of their sins, lest they, too, should come into that place of torment. Abraham said, They have the writings of Moses and the prophets, and in them, if they read, they will find sufficient warnings, and from them they can learn their duty if they will. The rich man said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one shall go to them from the dead and warn them, they will repent. Abra-

ham replied, If they will not heed the teachings of God in the Scripture, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

The Unjust Judge.

Jesus wanted to impress upon the minds of the deciples the necessity of much prayer, and for this reason he told them the following parable:

There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, neither regarded man. There were many judges of this kind in eastern cities, and their favor was often bought by the rich, while the poor were left to suffer by their verdict. In the same city where the unjust judge lived was a widow who came unto him very often, beseeching him to punish one who was her enemy.

Suitors in the East, even at the present time, will seat themselves day after day at a rich man's door, till they exhaust his patience, and he will grant their requests in order to get rid of them. The unjust judge to whom the widow applied said within himself, Though I fear not God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

And if this man, who was unjust and without mercy and compassion, was moved by the perseverence and importunity of the widow to grant her requests, will not God, who judges righteously and who is full of compassion and mercy, give unto his children what they pray for day and night, though for a while he may seem not to hear them? I tell you, he will avenge them speedily.

As Jesus was leaving the house of Matthew, there met him certain of the Pharisees, who were displeased that he should have taken part in such a feast, and they said to his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

When Jesus heard that, he answered, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He meant to say that the publicans and sinners needed him more than the Pharisees, who made so great a profession of religion, and that at the same time they were far more ready to listen to his teaching.

Then he spoke a parable, saying, Which of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when found, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

The Sheep that Went Astray.

The publicans and sinners were like the lost sheep that had gone astray. It could not be brought back to the fold without painful toil and effort, and therefore, when at last the effort had been crowned with success, the angels of God rejoiced more over that one lost sheep that had been brought back, than over the ninety and nine in whose case no such effort had been necessary.

Whilst Jesus was still speaking, there came towards him a man named Jairus, who was one of the rulers of the synagogue. He was running in great haste, and falling at the feet of Jesus, he besought him that he would help him, for he was in great trouble.

My little daughter, he said, lieth at the point of death. I pray thee, come and lay

thy hands upon her that she may be healed, and she shall live.

Jesus went with him, and many of the people also, who thronged and pressed around him. Amongst these was a certain woman, who had been ill for twelve years. She had spent all her money in going from one physician to another, but no one had been able to heal her; instead of getting any better, she only grew worse.

Then she heard of Jesus, but she was afraid to go and ask him to make her well, and she thought that if she could but touch his clothes, she would be healed without any one knowing anything about it, so she came behind him in the press, and touched the hem of his garment. As she did so, she felt herself suddenly become strong and well, and knew that she was healed of her disease.

But she had been mistaken in thinking that she could escape from the knowledge of Jesus. He knew at once that there had passed from him the healing power to cure, and he turned, and said, Who touched me?

A Happy Woman.

The disciples answered him, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

But Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

Then the woman saw that she could not be hid, and she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him, before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

And Jesus said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

He was still speaking to her when there came some messengers from the house of Jairus, who said to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

But when Jesus heard it, he said, Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole. And he went with them towards the house.

When they reached it, they heard a great sound of weeping and wailing; for it is the custom in the East, if any one dies, to hire mourners to cry aloud and express the grief of the friends by many tears and lamentations.

Jesus would not allow any one to enter the house with him, except the father of the child, and three of his disciples, Peter, and James, and John.

Immediately She Arose.

Then Jesus went into the room in which lay the dead body of the maiden. All round her were the mourners, weeping and lamenting, but Jesus told them that there was no occasion for their sorrow, since he had promised to make her well. Give place, he said, for the maid is not dead but sleepeth.

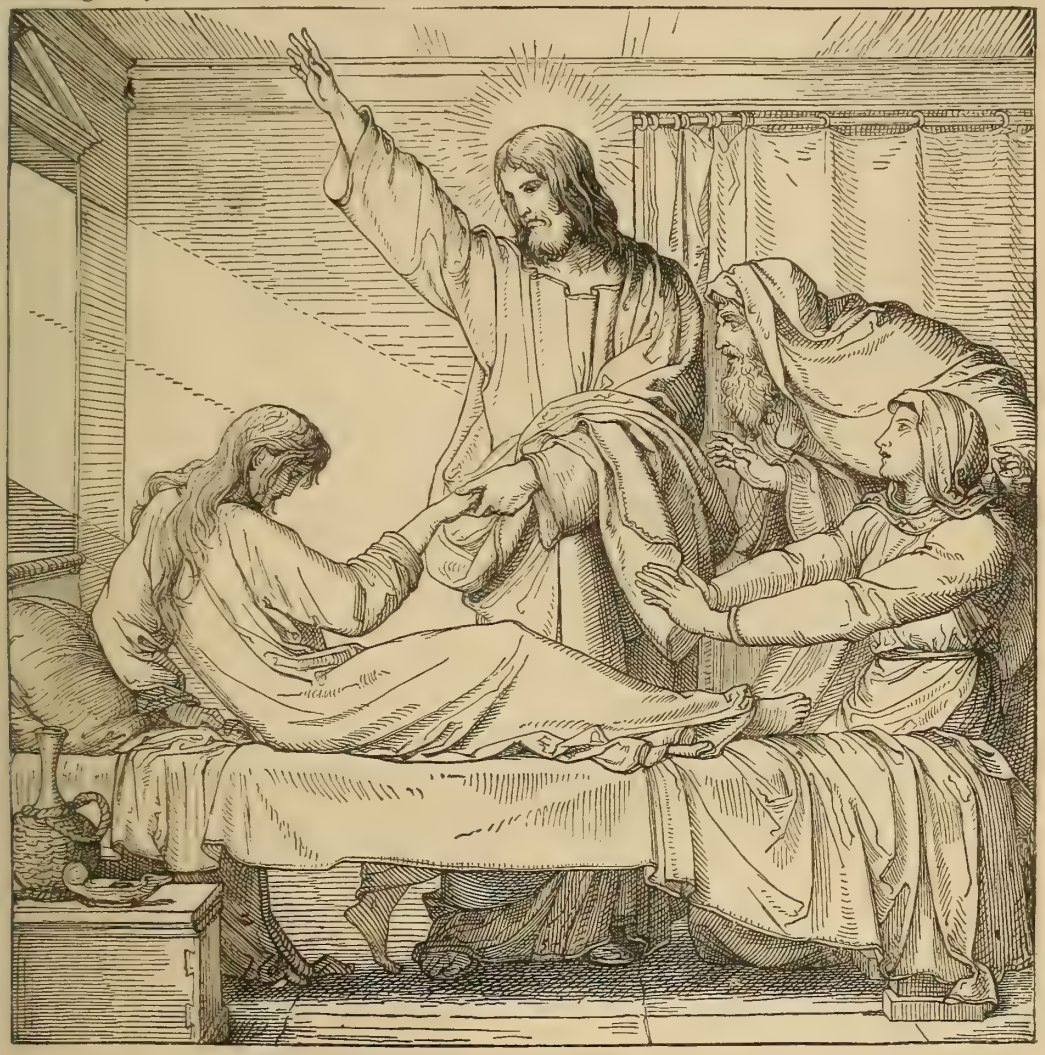
They thought they knew better; they were sure that she was really dead, and they laughed him to scorn. But he put them all out of the room, and allowed no one to remain but the father and mother of the maiden. Then he went up to her, and took her by the hand, saying some Hebrew words which mean, Little maid, I say unto thee, Arise.

And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway, and he commanded that something should be given her to eat.

It was now evening, and on leaving the house of Jairus, Jesus was followed all the way back to the house of Peter by two blind men, who cried out to him, saying, Have mercy on us, thou Son of David!

When they had reached the house, he asked them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They answered, Yea, Lord.

Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you, and his wishes, they went away and spread abroad his fame over all the country. They thought no doubt that in so doing, they were honoring him, but they forgot that the true way of doing him honor was by obedience.



CHRIST RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

their eyes were opened. Jesus asked for neither thanks nor reward, but he gave a command to the two blind men whom he had cured, that they should tell no one what had been done to them.

But instead of being careful to carry out his wishes, they went away and spread abroad his fame over all the country. They thought no doubt that in so doing, they were honoring him, but they forgot that the true way of doing him honor was by obedience.

Of all those to whom the blind men told their story, there were few who had not some sick or afflicted friend whom they immediately determined to bring to Jesus, and the crowds that gathered round him became every day greater and greater. He was

unable to rest; he had not time so much as to eat; he could not be alone for quiet prayer. He was obliged therefore to leave Capernaum again, and he went down to the sea-shore to sail away in the ship with his disciples.

As he went, some of those who had been following him, wished to continue with him, and said that they also would go in the ship; but Jesus told them that if they really desired to be his disciples, they must be prepared to sacrifice their homes, their friends, their wealth, and to live a life of toil and hardship.

Asleep in the Boat.

To one who said to him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, he answered, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.

The ship was now ready, and Jesus entered it with his disciples, while some of the rest followed in other little ships. It was a lovely evening, and at first all went well; the sea was calm and peaceful, and the ship sailed smoothly over the waters. Jesus was wearied out with his long days of teaching and healing, and he lay down upon a pillow and went to sleep.

But by-and-by there arose a mighty tempest in the sea. A sudden wind swept across the lake, and covered it with great waves, which beat over the ship and filled it with water. It was a time of deadly danger.

Still Jesus slept on, overcome with weariness, and still the storm became fiercer and fiercer. At last the disciples could no longer restrain themselves, and they came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish.

They were filled with fear because of the danger to which they were exposed. They had not as yet the faith of the centurion, who believed that Jesus was Lord of all, and he said to them, Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?

Then he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

Soon after this they reached the other side of the lake, and landed on a desolate, rocky shore, not far from the town of Gergesa.

They left the ship, and were walking towards the city, when there fell upon their ears a sharp cry, as of a human being in pain. Following the direction of the sound, they came to a place where a number of tombs had been hewn out in the rock, and amongst the tombs they saw a man who was crying and cutting himself with stones.

A Dangerous Man.

The man was possessed of devils, who had driven him mad. He had left his friends, cast off all his clothes, and now was in this desolate place, living amongst the tombs, night and day. His friends had tried to keep him under restraint, and had bound him with fetters and with chains; but the fetters he had broken in pieces, and the chains he had cast asunder. It was impossible to tame him, and he was so fierce that no one dared to go near him.

When he saw Jesus coming towards him, the devil within him cried out with a loud voice, and said, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not.

Jesus stood still, and asked him, What is thy name? The devil answered, My name is Legion, for we are many. If thou cast us

out of this man, suffer us at least to enter into the herd of swine yonder. A Legion was the name given by the Romans to six thousand soldiers.

Jesus answered, Go! and when he had said this, the devils left the man, and entered into a large herd of swine, who were feeding at some little distance. No sooner had this taken place than the swine became greatly agitated, and ran violently to and fro.

At last they came to a steep rock overhanging the sea, and, being unable to control themselves, they rushed over the edge of the rock and perished in the waters.

The herdsmen who were in charge of them fled away into the city, and told all that had happened—how the man possessed with devils had been cured, and how the swine had perished.

The whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they had reached the place, they saw the man who had been so fierce and so wild, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

He Sent the Man Home.

This stranger, who had so lately landed on their shores, had already conquered the fierce madman whom no one had ever yet been able to tame, and had, moreover, destroyed two thousand of their swine. They feared greatly lest he should again exercise his wonderful power in such a way as to injure them; and thinking more of their own loss in the destruction of the swine than of the gain to the poor man, they besought Jesus that he would depart out of their coasts.

He turned and left them, for he could do them no good against their will, and went down to the shore to sail away again in the ship by which he had come. The poor man who had been cured went with him; he could not bear to leave the side of his deliverer, and begged that he might be allowed to go away with him in the ship.

But Jesus would not take him away. He said, Go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

The man obeyed his words, and published abroad in all that country, and in the coasts of Decapolis, what great things Jesus had done unto him.

Followed by a Multitude.

This time the ship had a prosperous journey, and Jesus landed with his disciples on another coast, where the people received him gladly. As before, he went through the cities and villages, teaching and curing those who were sick and afflicted, followed by his disciples and by a great multitude of other people.

Amongst those who followed Jesus were several women, who also supplied his needs, providing him with food, and with money when it was required. One of these women was the wife of Chuza, the steward of King Herod, and her name was Susanna; another was Mary Magdalene, who had washed the feet of Jesus with her tears in the house of the Pharisee; a third was Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of the two disciples, James and John.

All day long, Jesus ministered to the people, and when night came, he either accepted the hospitality of some of those who invited him to rest in their houses, or else spent the night in the open air with his disciples, making his bed on the green grass, with the stars shining far above over his head.

Often, too, he would leave his disciples to take their rest, whilst he himself would go away alone to a mountain apart, and spend the whole night in prayer to God.

So the days went by, and the multitudes that gathered round him became always greater and greater. When he saw them he was filled with compassion, and one day he said to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest. After this he went away, as he often did, and passed the night in prayer.

The next day, he called the disciples around him, and said that he was going to set apart twelve of them for a special work. They were to be his chosen friends, and were usually to go with him wherever he went, but just now he had something else for them to do.

The Twelve Apostles.

Seven of these twelve disciples (who were called the Twelve Apostles) had already been chosen. Andrew, and John, the son of Zebedee, were the two who had first come to Jesus in Judæa, about a year before this time, and they had been quickly followed by Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel (who was also called Bartholomew). Since then, James, the brother of John, had been called from his fishing, and Matthew the publican from the place of toll.

Five others were chosen at this time. There was a second James, who was the son of Alphæus, and a second Simon, called also Zelotes; there was also Thomas, and Thaddæus, or Lebbæus, and, last of all, Judas Iscariot.

Jesus told them that he himself was going up to Jerusalem for a time, but that he wished them to remain in Galilee and carry on his work. They were not to go into any city of the Samaritans or of the Gentiles, but to remain among the cities of Israel, and preach the good news of the kingdom of heaven.

They were to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, and to cast out devils, as Jesus himself had done. Like him also, they were to have neither gold nor silver, nor even a change of clothing, but were to depend for everything upon the kindness of those whom they taught.

Those who were good to them, he said, would be richly rewarded. If anyone gave them even a cup of cold water in a spirit of love, he would not fail to receive a blessing.

When they entered a city or a village, they were to inquire who in it would be the most likely to receive them kindly, and then they were to go to the house to which they had been directed, and as they entered, they were to say, Peace be to this house.

If the people made them welcome, they were to remain in the same house so long as they continued in that city or village; but if they refused to receive them, then they were to leave that place and go to another.

How to Save Their Lives.

They must be prepared, he said, for toil and hardships; and must be ready to sacrifice themselves even to death, if need be, for the truth they had to teach. But even though they might suffer for a time, they might feel sure that their Father in heaven was watching over them and caring for them; and they would be called upon to make no sacrifice of which their Master would not first set them an example.

He that doth not take up his cross and follow after me, said Jesus, is not worthy of me. He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. Thus he taught the great lesson of self-sacrifice.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit
Matt. VII. 17
Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit
John XV 8
Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.
Matt. VII 20

GOOD TREES BRING FORTH GOOD FRUIT.

JOY AFTER A NIGHT OF WEEPING.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA—TROUBLE WITH THE PHARISEES—PLUCKING CORN ON THE SABBATH—DAVID EATING THE SHEW-BREAD—DEATH AND BURIAL OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—FEEDING A MULTITUDE—STORM ON THE SEA—JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER—RESCUE OF PETER—A MOTHER'S APPEAL FOR HER DAUGHTER—THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN—A BLIND MAN HEALED—PETER CALLED A ROCK—THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION—A LUNATIC CURED.

MANY who had heard of Jesus were anxious to learn more concerning him, and so when he had made an end of commanding his twelve Apostles, he sent them out by two and two to teach in all the cities of Galilee, whilst he himself made his journey to Jerusalem alone.

Now there was in Jerusalem a certain pool of water called the pool of Bethesda. Into this pool there came an angel at certain seasons, who stirred the water; and so it was, that the first person who stepped into the pool after the stirring of the water, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. The Jews had built five porches round the pool, and in these there lay constantly a number of sick people, and of blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water, each with the hope that he might be the first to get in.

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, he went to see the poor afflicted people at the pool of Bethesda, and he found there a man who had suffered from an infirmity for thirty-eight years. He could not move quickly, and as he had no friends to help him, he had never in all that time been able to reach the pool before anyone else. Jesus knew how long he had suffered, and he went up to him and said, Wilt thou be made whole?

The man answered, Sir, I have no man, when the water is stirred, to put me into the pool, but while I am coming another steppeth down before me.

Went Away with His Couch.

Jesus said unto him, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk, and at these words, the power which for thirty-eight years had forsaken the limbs of the sick man was restored to them, and he arose and departed.

Now it happened that the day on which Jesus cured this man was the Sabbath day. The Pharisees were exceedingly particular about the observance of the Sabbath, and many of the rules which they laid down for the people were concerning the various things that might or might not be done. One of these rules was that no burden might be carried on the Sabbath day, so that when some of the Pharisees met the man carrying his mattress, they stopped him and said, It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

The man answered, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.

Then the Pharisees asked, What man is he that said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?

At first the man was unable to answer their question, for he did not know who Jesus was, and immediately after curing him, he had disappeared among the crowd. But soon afterwards it happened that Jesus found the man in the temple, and said to him, Thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

The Pharisees Offended.

Then the man knew who it was, and he went and told the Pharisees that it was Jesus who had made him well. From this time, the Pharisees began to persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the Sabbath day.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. He meant to say that the work of God goes on, no matter what day of the week it is. The sun continues to shine, the heavens are held up high above the earth, the trees and flowers are nourished, the sea is kept within its bounds, the children of men are preserved from danger on the Sabbath just as much as on any other day. And, therefore, Jesus said that he would do likewise, and would not cease from his works of love and kindness, even though it might be the Sabbath day.

Jesus did not remain long in Jerusalem, but returned to Galilee, where the twelve Apostles again gathered round him.

They had been through the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching and healing, and now the multitudes that followed Jesus were greater than ever. But about this time the Pharisees began to look upon him with displeasure, and two things that shortly happened, added to their indignation.

It was again the Sabbath day, and Jesus was walking through the corn-fields with his disciples. They were hungry, and as they went, they plucked some of the ears of corn and began to eat them, rubbing them in their hands to separate the chaff, which was then blown away by the wind.

Presently they were met by some of the Pharisees, who were angry with the disciples when they saw what they were doing, and said to Jesus, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath.

It was not that there was any harm in taking the corn, for anybody passing through the corn-fields was allowed to help himself to as much as he pleased; but the Pharisees had made a rule that no sort of threshing was to be done on the Sabbath day, and they said that to separate the chaff from the ears of corn was really a kind of threshing, and therefore, a breaking of the Sabbath.

In answer to their rebuke, Jesus reminded them of what had been done by David, the great king, who had been called the man after God's own heart.

David Perishing With Hunger.

Once when David was in peril of his life, he came to the city where the tabernacle of God was resting (for it was before the building of the temple), and asked the priest to give him some food. The priest answered that he had nothing but the sacred bread, which was placed each week before the Lord, and which no one was allowed to eat but the priests only.

But David was perishing with hunger, and so were his followers, and he made the priest give him the sacred bread, though it would not have been right to take it at any other time.

Jesus also reminded the Pharisees that in the temple the priests did much necessary work on the Sabbath day in preparing the fires, and slaying the animals for sacrifice. He said, moreover, that if the Pharisees had

understood what the prophets had so often told them, namely, that what God requires is the sincere worship of the heart and not any mere observance of rules, they would not have condemned the disciples, who in the sight of God had done no wrong.

Later on the same day, he entered the synagogue according to his custom, and behold, there was a man there who had a withered hand.

Doing Good on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees were now eager for some opportunity of publicly accusing Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, so when they saw the man who had come into the synagogue with the hope of being cured, they said to Jesus, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?

Before answering them, he commanded the man to stand forth in the midst, and then he said, I will also ask you one thing. Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it? What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.

He longed to make them understand that in their manner of explaining the law of God about the Sabbath, they were not honoring, but dishonoring him; but they would not learn. They would not even make any answer, and Jesus looked round upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts.

Then, turning to the man with the withered hand, he said, Stretch forth thy hand.

A moment before, the arm was lying at the man's side, dead and useless, but he did according to the word of Jesus, and behold his hand was restored whole as the other.

But the Pharisees only hated Jesus the more, and they went out and took counsel how they might destroy him, so that he was again obliged to withdraw himself from Capernaum.

All this time, John the Baptist was still shut up in a gloomy dungeon in the fortress of Macherus.

The weeks and months had passed wearily away, although he was allowed to see his disciples from time to time, and to hear from them of what was passing in the outer world.

Once he had sent some of his disciples to Jesus, and had received from him a message of comfort and encouragement. He had told them to ask Jesus if he was indeed the Messiah for whom they had been looking, and Jesus answered the messengers by telling them to go back to John and tell him of all that was going on. Tell him, he said, that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.

A Wicked Queen.

John might perhaps have been released, but he had an enemy in the queen, whose name was Herodias. She was a very beautiful woman, who had been the wife of Herod's brother; but Herod had carried her off from his brother's house, and had married her himself. This was very wicked, and John said to Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

It was for this reason that the queen hated John. She would gladly have killed him if she could, but she had not been able as yet to accomplish her purpose, for Herod feared John, knowing he was a just man and a holy, and he often sent for him, and heard him gladly.

But at last the opportunity came for which the queen had heen waiting. It was the birthday of King Herod, and he had made a great supper to all his lords and high captains, and the chief men of Galilee. When the feast was ended, the daughter of Herodias came in and danced before them. She pleased Herod so well that he said he would give her whatever she should ask, and promised with an oath that she should have it, even if it were the half of his kingdom.

The girl went out and said to her mother, What shall I ask? And then the queen thought of her revenge, and told her to go back quickly and say, I will that thou give me here at once the head of John the Baptist in a dish.

When the king heard what it was that the girl desired, he was exceeding sorry, but he had promised by an oath, in the presence of many witnesses, to give her whatsoever she should ask, and though he knew he should do a greater wrong by keeping his promise than by breaking it, he had not the courage to deny her.

THE BURIAL OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

He sent a messenger in all haste to the prison to command that John should be put to death immediately, and soon the bleeding head of the prophet was brought to him upon one of the golden dishes that had been

used at the feast. He gave the ghastly present to the girl, and she took it and carried it to her mother.

You may imagine how grieved and distressed the disciples of John were when they heard that the king had killed their dear master. They went to the prison, then lovingly and sadly took up the headless body, and laid it reverently in a tomb.

A Crowd Waiting for Him.

After this they went and told Jesus. Their hearts were sore and full of sadness, and they knew he would sympathize with them —they knew he loved their master.

Did Jesus grieve? Yes; for no heart was ever so loving or tender as his own. When he heard what had happened, his heart was wrung with grief, and he longed to be alone for a time, until at least the first sad days of mourning should have passed. He entered the ship and went away with the disciples, hoping to get to a desert place where he would be at a distance from the multitude, but it was in vain.

The people had seen him leave, and having guessed where he was going, they had hurried to the place by land, so that when Jesus arrived in the ship, he found them already there, waiting for him.

But much as he had longed for rest and solitude, Jesus showed no signs of impatience as he caught sight of the waiting multitude. With infinite compassion he looked round upon them, and all that day he taught them and healed their sick.

When the evening drew near, the disciples came to him, and reminded him that the day was wearing away and they were in a desert place; and they asked him to send away the people quickly, that they might go into the towns and villages near, and buy themselves food before the night should set in.

But Jesus would not send the people away hungry at that late hour, and he said to the disciples, They need not depart—give ye them to eat.

The disciples did not know how this was to be accomplished, for they had but five loaves and two fishes, and if they had attempted to buy food for such a multitude, two hundred pennyworth would not have been sufficient.

They waited to see what Jesus would do, and he said, Make the men sit down.

Now there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down, in number about five thousand. There were a hundred rows of them, and fifty men in each row.

Then Jesus took into his hands the bread and the fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed the food. After this, he broke the bread, and divided the fishes also, and gave a portion to each of the twelve Apostles to set before the people.

And so it was that they gave to each man as much as he desired, and yet there was always enough left for the next. Every one of the five thousand ate and was satisfied, and after that, when Jesus told the disciples to take up the broken pieces that remained, they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves that remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Many Believe on Him.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is, of a truth, that Prophet who should come into the world.

When the children of Israel thought of the Messiah for whose coming their fathers and their father's fathers had looked forward with eager hope, they always pictured him as a mighty king.

The miracle that Jesus had just wrought, convinced the people that he was indeed the

CHRIST FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

Messiah, and they could not understand his unwillingness to lead them against their enemies. They tried to take him by force and make him a king, but he would not yield to their wishes.

All through his life, Jesus sought in vain to make his followers understand that he had come to found a kingdom, not of earth but of heaven, and that the enemies against whom he waged war were not human beings, but wicked thoughts and evil deeds. It was not till long afterwards that they knew what he meant by the saying, My kingdom is not of this world.

They Thought He Was a Spirit.

At last all the people were sent away to their own homes. Night had now fallen, and Jesus was able to obtain that quiet time for communion with God which he had so greatly desired. He told his disciples to go back without him by ship to Capernaum, saying that he himself would follow them later, and they went down to the shore and launched their ship, leaving him in prayer upon the mountain side.

It ought to have taken two or three hours only to sail to Capernaum, but the night was stormy, and when midnight was already passed, the disciples were still far away. The sails were of no use, for the wind was contrary, and they had been obliged to take to the oars, but even so they made little progress. The wind was blowing heavily against them, and they were faint and weary after the long day's labor.

By-and-by, in the fourth watch of the night, in the thick darkness that comes before the dawn, they saw the figure of a man coming towards them, clothed in white garments.

He was walking on the crests of the waves, and they cried out for fear, supposing that they had seen a spirit. But their fear was soon dispelled, for they heard a well-known voice which rose above the raging of the wind, and said to them, Be of good cheer, it is I. Be not afraid.

It was Jesus, who had seen their distress, and had come to help them. They knew his voice, and Peter cried out, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water.

Jesus answered, Come, and Peter left the ship and walked upon the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, Lord, save me!

Then Jesus stretched out his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

After this, they both entered into the ship, and immediately the wind ceased, so that they soon touched the coast of Capernaum.

The next day, Jesus entered into the synagogue, and taught. The people whom he had fed on the previous evening had also made their way to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus, but they were astonished to find that he had arrived before them, for they had seen the disciples leave without him, and they asked him, Master, when camest thou hither?

The Bread of Heaven.

Jesus did not answer their question, but he said, Ye seek me because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.

Then he went on to say to them, The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life. I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

They did not understand his meaning, but afterwards he made it more plain to his disciples. The words that I speak unto you, he said, they are spirit and they are life.

In consequence of the enmity of the Pharisees, Jesus again left Capernaum, and this time he went away to a greater distance, even as far as the land of Phenicia, to the coasts of the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon.

He did not wish to do any mighty works in these places, for he had left the land of Israel because he desired rest, and time for quiet thought and prayer; but even here the people had heard of him, and his fame could not be hid.

As he was journeying in that country, there came a Gentile woman, who cried unto him, saying, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

The Daughter Was Cured.

Jesus answered her not a word, but the woman continued to follow him, and the disciples, who were vexed that she should be so persistent, said to him, Send her away, for she crieth after us.

This Jesus would not do; but he said aloud, so that the woman could hear it, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But though the woman heard this, she did not even then give up hope. Her great love for her daughter urged her on, and coming nearer, she fell at the feet of Jesus, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

Jesus saw that she was most earnest in her request, and in order to make a yet further trial of her faith, he said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. Meekly she answered, Yea, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.

Then Jesus felt that she need be tried no longer, and he said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith. Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. The devil is gone out of thy daughter.

Once before, in the case of the Roman centurion, Jesus had marvelled at the faith of a Gentile. This poor woman, in like manner, had shown greater faith than many of the children of Israel. As soon as Jesus had spoken the words that she had greatly desired to hear, she turned away fully satisfied; and when she came home, she found her daughter cured, and lying peacefully upon the bed.

After leaving the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus returned into Galilee by a route which led him through the region of Decapolis, or the Ten Cities.

This country lies to the east of Galilee, and it was here that Jesus had landed, some time before, when he cured the man possessed with devils. The people had then been afraid of his power, and had besought him to depart out of their coasts. But since that time, the man who had been healed had spread abroad the knowledge of what Jesus had done for him, and now all the people gathered round Jesus, bringing with them those that were blind, lame, dumb, crippled, and many others. They cast them down at his feet, and he healed them.

He Both Heard and Spoke.

Among the rest was a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech, so that it was impossible to understand what he said. Jesus took him aside from the multitude, and putting his fingers into his ears, he spit, and touched his tongue.

Then he looked up to heaven and sighed, for his spirit was oppressed by all the misery and suffering around him; but he knew that

through the help of the Father in heaven the evil could be overcome. After this, he again looked at the man, and pronounced a Hebrew word, which means, Be opened. Immediately his ears were opened, and the cord that had fastened down his tongue was loosed, so that he could speak plainly.

Jesus charged the people that they should not tell anyone of what had been done, but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it, for they were beyond measure astonished; and they said, He hath done all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

The consequence was that, as before, the multitude gathered round Jesus more closely than ever, and for three whole days after this, he taught and healed them without ceasing.

They were now in a desert place, and the food that the people had brought with them was all gone. Then Jesus said to his disciples, I have compassion on the multitude, for they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way, for divers of them came from far.

Only a Few Loaves and Fishes.

The disciples thought, perhaps, of the time, not so long ago, when he had formerly fed the multitude, but all they said was, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread, here in the wilderness?

Jesus asked them, how many loaves have ye? They answered, Seven, and a few little fishes. Then, as before, Jesus commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks. After this, he divided them, and gave the pieces to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the multitude.

And they did all eat and were filled, and they took up of the broken pieces that remained, seven baskets full. Now they that had eaten were about four thousand men, besides women and children.

After this, Jesus sent away the multitude, and taking ship, he crossed over to the other side of the lake, and returned to Capernaum.

He was, however, obliged to leave it again almost immediately, on account of the ill-will of the Pharisees; and this time he set his face towards the north-east.

A Man's Sight Restored.

He had to pass near the cities of Bethsaida and Cæsarea Philippi, and when he was in the neighborhood of Bethsaida, they brought to him a blind man, beseeching him that he would give him back his sight.

Jesus took him by the hand and led him away from the town, and when he had laid his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw anything. The man looked up and said, I see men as trees, walking. Then Jesus again laid his hands upon his eyes, and now his sight was altogether restored, and he could see clearly.

Later on, when they had come near to the town of Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus one day asked his disciples, Whom say the people that I am.

They answered, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others say that Jeremiah or one of the old prophets is risen again.

He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Then Jesus said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon the son of Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto

thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. The word Peter means the Rock.

After this, Jesus began to tell his disciples that a great trouble was before them. Soon, he said, they would go up to Jerusalem, and then he would suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and would be killed, but on the third day he would rise again.

Peter Sharply Rebuked.

They heard what he said, but they could not believe it, or understand that he was speaking, in truth, of suffering and death. It was but now that Peter had declared him to be the Messiah, and Jesus had approved his words. How could it be that he was going to be put to death? Surely, when they reached Jerusalem, the chief priests would receive him with honor, and he would reign gloriously! If otherwise, would it not be better to refrain from going to Jerusalem at all? There were men in abundance in Galilee who were ready to hail Jesus as their king.

Peter even ventured to remonstrate with him, and answered him, saying, This be far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee.

But Jesus rebuked him sharply, and said, Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He meant to teach his disciples, and through them all mankind, that the worst service a man can render to his friend, is that of trying to dissuade him from the path of duty, even though it may seem to be the path of trial and of failure.

And then he added, in words like those which he had used in sending out the twelve Apostles, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

A Snow-Capped Mountain.

Passing on from the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus continued to journey northwards with his disciples. Before them in the distance there shone the summit of a noble mountain, covered with perpetual snow. It was called Mount Hermon, and its glistening crown could be seen for many miles away, as it stood out, grand and beautiful, against the evening sky.

It was towards this mountain that Jesus was now journeying, and at last, on the eighth day, he reached its foot. The night was already coming on, but he would not delay beginning to make the ascent, and, leaving the rest of the disciples below, he went forward with only the three that he loved the best, Peter and James and John.

But after a time, the three disciples, who were tired after their day's journey, became heavy with sleep, and Jesus left them to lie down and rest, whilst he himself climbed higher up the mountain, that he might spend the time in prayer. His mind was filled with the thought of all that was to

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

befall him at Jerusalem, and he desired to gain strength from God to tread the throny path that lay before him.

Meanwhile Peter and James and John had fallen into a deep sleep, but suddenly they woke, and became aware that something very solemn and wonderful was taking place. Looking up towards that part of the mountain where Jesus had been praying, they beheld him transfigured before them. His countenance did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

And behold there were two others—Moses, the giver of the Law, and Elijah, the great prophet, who were talking with Jesus. They were speaking of his death, which was to take place at Jerusalem.

Never before had the disciples beheld so glorious a vision, and as they gazed upon the altered form of their Master, they were filled with awe and solemn rapture. They longed to continue looking forever on that wondrous sight, and Peter cried out, Lord, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

He hardly knew what he said, but he felt that he would like to continue there forever, living in tents made of branches upon the mountain-side.

But even as he spoke, there came a cloud which overshadowed them, and the disciples feared as they entered into it. Then they heard a voice coming out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. And they fell upon their faces to the earth, overpowered with awe at the voice of God.

The Lunatic Child.

How long they remained thus they knew not, but after a while they felt some one touch them, and looking up, they perceived that the vision was past, and that Jesus had descended from the height above, and was standing by their side.

From the majesty of the lonely mountain-top, from the peace and the rapture of communion with God, Jesus descended with his three disciples into the plain.

As they approached the place where they had left the rest, they perceived a great multitude gathered together, with the disciples in the midst, and certain of the Scribes and Pharisees, clamoring and disputing.

The radiance which the disciples had beheld, had not as yet entirely left the face of Jesus, and as he came near, the multitude gazed at him with astonishment, and running towards him, saluted him.

He asked what was the cause of the tumult, and one of them answered, Master, I beseech thee to look upon my son, for he is mine only child. He is lunatic and sore vexed, and, behold, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he foameth. And I brought him to thy disciples that they should cast it out, and they could not.

Jesus was grieved that his disciples should have been unable to cast out the evil spirit, for he had already given them this power, and he cried out, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Then, turning to the father he said, bring thy son hither to me.

The boy was brought forward into the midst, but as he was coming, the devil dashed him down and tore him with grievous convulsions, and he fell upon the ground, and wallowed, foaming.

Jesus asked the father, How long is it since this hath come unto him?

He said, From a child. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

All things, answered Jesus, are possible to him that believeth.

Then the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe—help thou mine unbelief.

The Evil Spirit Came Out.

And he to whom no one ever appealed in vain for help, had compassion on the poor father, and turning again to the child, he rebuked the devil within him, saying, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

The spirit cried out and again convulsed the boy, but at last it left him, and he lay on the ground as one dead, insomuch that many of the crowd said, He is dead.

But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and delivered him again to his father, cured and in his right mind.

Afterwards, when they were alone, the disciples asked Jesus why it was that they had been unable to cast out the evil spirit, for before, when Jesus had sent them out by two and two, they had cast out many devils. He answered, Because of your unbelief.

CHAPTER XXX.

LESSON FROM A LITTLE CHILD—THE UNJUST STEWARD—MONEY FOUND IN A STRANGE PLACE—FEAST OF TABERNACLES—PHARISEES ANGRY—THE MAN BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH—TEN LEPERS HEALED—JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN—THE GOOD SAMARITAN—JESUS AT JERUSALEM AND BETHANY—THE RAISING OF LAZARUS—TWO BLIND MEN RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT.

JESUS now turned his back upon the beautiful snow mountain, and began his homeward journey towards Capernaum. As they went, he again spoke to his disciples of going up to Jerusalem, and of how he would be delivered into the hands of wicked men, and be killed, and after three days would rise again.

They listened to his words, but did not in the least understand their meaning. The one thing that filled their minds was the thought of going up to Jerusalem. Jesus had now told them plainly that he was the Messiah, and they made sure that when he next went there, he would be received with honor by the chief priests and Scribes and Pharisees.

So much, indeed, were they occupied with these thoughts, that on the way to Capernaum, they began disputing with one another as to which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, which they supposed their Master would now establish in in some outward form.

Jesus said nothing at the time, but in the evening, after they had reached Capernaum, and were sitting in the house at their evening meal, he asked them what it was that they had been disputing about on the way.

They were ashamed to tell him; but Jesus knew what it was, and he called a little child to him, and said to the disciples, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all. This was the only way to become first.

The Little Child.

This was not the only time when the question arose among the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest, and Jesus used to tell them that in the kingdom of heaven it was not as in the kingdoms of this world, where those who had the most power are accounted the greatest. On the contrary, he said, It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be a servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be served by others, but himself to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus went on to tell the disciples that those who showed kindness to little children were really doing a service to himself, and that he would accept the kindness as if it were actually done unto him.

He warned them also that a terrible punishment would overtake those who, by set-

ting them a bad example, should do harm to little children, or any that were young or ignorant; or who by carelessness or wickedness should cause them to fall into sin. It would be better for them, he said, that a millstone should be cast about their necks, and that they should be drowned in the depths of the sea.

After this, Jesus spoke to them about the duty of forgiving those who had done them some wrong, and he told them a parable of a certain king, who had a servant that owed him ten thousand talents. This was an enormous sum—for a talent was worth about twelve hundred dollars of our money—and as the servant had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold into slavery with his wife and his children and all that he had, that payment might be made.

Then the servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

And the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and he set him free, and forgave him the whole debt.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a small debt of a hundred pence, and instead of remembering the mercy that had just been shown to him, he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

His fellow-servant fell down at his feet, just as he had fallen at the feet of the king, and said, in the very same words, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

JESUS TEACHING HUMILITY BY A LITTLE CHILD.

But he would not; and he went and cast him into prison until he should have paid the debt.

His fellow-servants saw what was done, and they were very sorry, and went and told their lord all that was done. Then the king called that servant into his presence, and said to him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that great debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

The Tribute-Money.

And the king was angry, and he delivered him over unto the tormentors until he should have paid all that was due unto him.

Even so, ended Jesus, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one the trespasses of his brother.

Whilst Jesus was at Capernaum, he stayed as usual in the house of Peter, and hearing that he had returned, the men who collected the tribute-money came to Peter, and asked, Doth not your Master pay tribute?

This was not the tax paid to the Romans, but another tax of half a silver shekel—about eighteen cents of our money—which was claimed for the expenses of the temple services. It was paid by every Jew, in whatever part of the world he might live, and when Peter was asked if his Master was willing to pay the tribute, he answered, Yes.

But when he returned to the house, and told his Master of what he had said, there was no money for paying the tax. Then Jesus said to him, Go thou to the sea and cast a hook, and take the fish that first cometh up, and when thou has opened his mouth, thou shalt find a silver shekel. That take, and give unto them for me and thee.

The brethren of Jesus now came to him, and urged him to go up to Jerusalem, and make himself known as the Messiah. The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand, and this, they said, would be a good opportunity, for Jerusalem would then be crowded with people.

Jesus at the Feast.

But Jesus thought otherwise. His time was not yet come, and he said to his brethren that if he went at all to the feast, it would not be to proclaim himself the Messiah, but as it were in secret. He told them to journey on without him, and he himself remained in Galilee for some days after they had left.

Then he went to Jerusalem alone, and reached the city after the feast had begun, when all the people were wondering whether he would come or not. His first act was to go into the temple and teach, and the people listened with astonishment, for they knew that he had been brought up in no school of learning; but Jesus answered, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.

As in Galilee he had taught the people by parables, so now he drew lessons from the things around him. While the Feast of Tabernacles lasted, it was the custom each morning to perform a great ceremony called the Drawing of Water.

The people assembled at the temple, and when the morning sacrifice had been laid upon the altar, the priest took a golden jug and carried it down to the Pool of Siloam, which was at some little distance. There he filled it with water, and then returned to the temple; and as he re-entered the gates, the rest of the priests blew a joyful blast upon the silver trumpets, and continued to blow until the priest had carried the golden jug up to the altar and poured out the water into a silver basin.

Then all the people sang the six Psalms from the 113th to 118th, and when they came to the verse, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever, they waved the palm branches which they carried in their hands, and rejoiced before the Lord.

On the last day of the feast, after the people had witnessed this ceremony every day for seven days, Jesus began to tell them about the living water of which he had spoken to the woman of Samaria, and he cried aloud so that all could hear, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

Again, on another day, Jesus pointed to the two gigantic golden candlesticks which stood in one of the temple courts. They were fifty cubits high, that is to say, about fourteen times the height of a man, and at the top of each were five lamps which were reached by a very long ladder. Every evening while the feast lasted, these lamps were lighted, and they lit up the whole city.

While the people were occupied in looking at the lighting of the lamps, Jesus said unto them, I am the Light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.

Would not Arrest Him.

Many of the people would gladly have listened to the words of Jesus, but the Pharisees always interrupted him, and tried to make it appear that he had said something wrong. They were afraid lest he should gain an influence over the people and lead them to think less of their own teaching.

They even went so far as to send officers to seize him, but the officers returned without their prisoner. Whilst they were waiting for an opportunity to take him, they heard the words that he was speaking to the people, and they went back to the Pharisees and said, Never man spake like this man.

The Pharisees were angry, but one of them named Nicodemus, the same who had once visited Jesus by night, asked the rest if it was fair to condemn a man before he had been tried and found guilty. They knew that it was against their law to do so, but they would not pay any attention, and only mocked at Nicodemus, asking if he also was a follower of the Prophet of Galilee.

Jesus again told the people, on the day after these things, that he was the Light of the World, and the Pharisees, as usual, began to contradict and to question him. They said, Thou bearest witness of thyself, thy witness is not true.

In answer to this, Jesus told them that he had been sent by God his heavenly Father to teach them things that he himself had been taught by God; and he said, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.

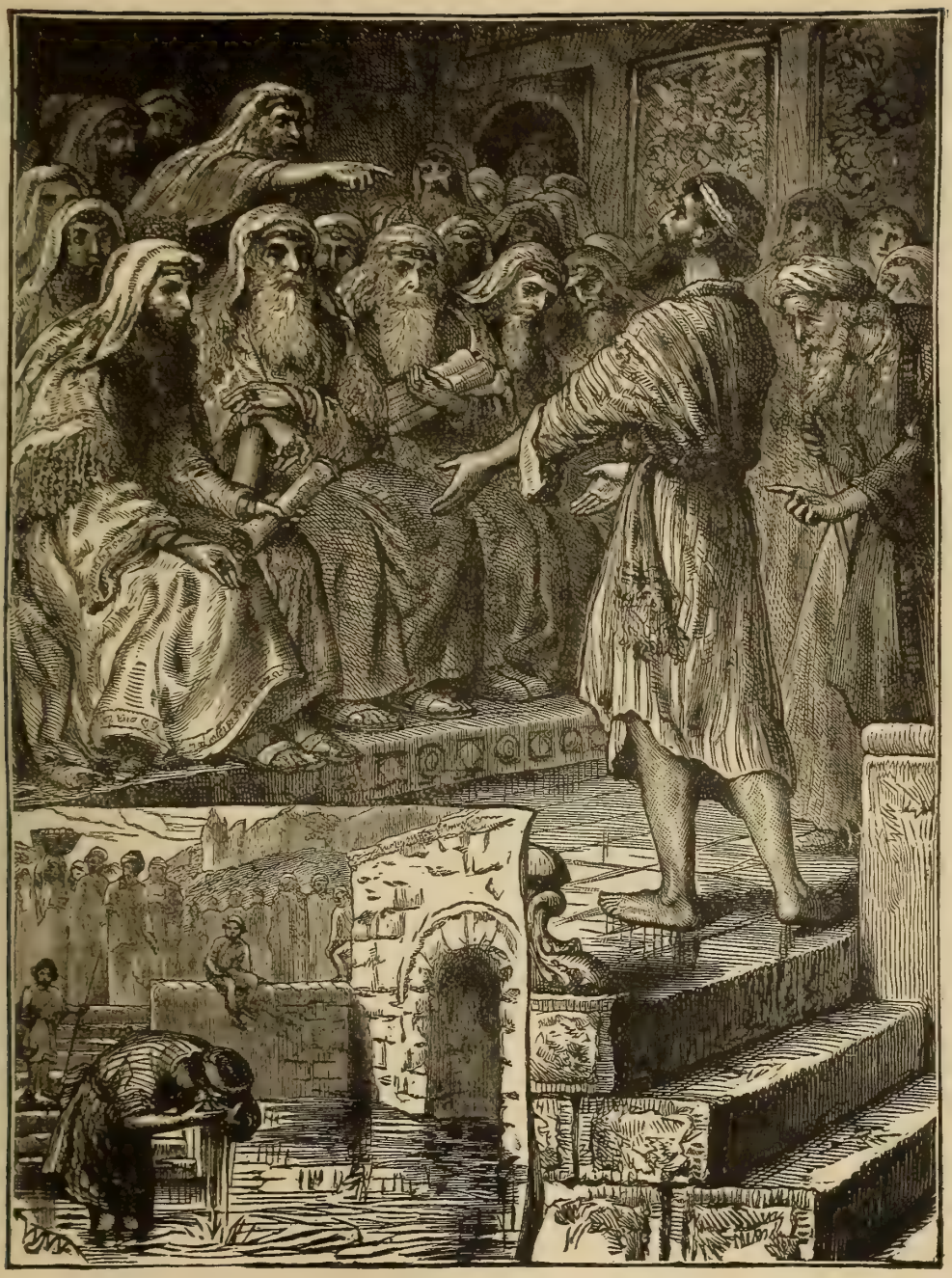
They Wanted to Stone Him.

The Jews answered, Thou are not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

At these words they were filled with horror, for it seemed to them that the most awful blasphemy had been uttered. They thought that Jesus, being a man, had made himself equal with God; and as the punishment decreed in the Law for those who should blaspheme the name of God was death by stoning, they took up stones to cast at him. But the hour for him to die was not yet come, and he hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Almost immediately afterwards, it happened that Jesus noticed a beggar, who was well known in Jerusalem as having been



"WHEREAS I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE."

blind from his birth. The disciples were now again with their Master, and they asked him saying, Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

The News Spread Quickly.

It was a common belief among the Jews that afflictions were the direct consequence of sin; but Jesus told the disciples that they must not suppose that either the man himself or his parents had sinned more than others, but that they should presently see the works of God manifested in him. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, he said; the night cometh when no man can work.

After this, he anointed the eyes of the blind man, and told him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. This he did, and presently came back, cured and able to see.

The news that the blind man had been restored to sight was quickly spread abroad. The neighbors could hardly believe that he, whom they now saw with his eyes open, was the blind beggar they had known so well. Some said it is he; others said, No, but it is like him; but the man himself said, I am he.

Then they asked him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash; so I went and washed, and I received my sight.

The news soon reached the ears of the Pharisees, and the man who had been blind was brought before them, and made to repeat the whole story of how he had been cured; but as it happened that the day on which this had taken place was the Sabbath, the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day.

Some of them, however, disagreed, and said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?

There was thus a division among them, and they turned again to the man, and asked what he thought of him. He answered, He is a prophet.

But the Pharisees were not pleased with this answer, and they tried next to persuade themselves that the man had not been really cured, so they sent for his parents, and asked them, Is this your son who ye say was born blind?

The parents answered, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but how he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.

Believed With all His Heart.

The parents were, in fact, afraid of the Pharisees, for they had agreed already that if any man should confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should not be allowed to come any more to the synagogue to join in the worship of God.

Then the Pharisees called the man again, and told him that Jesus was a sinner. But the man answered, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

They tried to convince him that they were in the right, but when they could not make him change his opinion of the man who had cured him, they carried out their threat, and cast him out of the synagogue.

Jesus heard what they had done, and desired to comfort him, so he found him out, and said, Dost thou believe in the Son of God?

The man asked, Who is he, Lord, that I should believe in him? And when Jesus answered, It is he that talketh with thee, he

cried out, Lord I believe, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

After these things, Jesus returned for a short time to Galilee, and now it seemed to the disciples that their dearest wish was about to be fulfilled, for Jesus spoke of again going up to Jerusalem, and did not discourage those who expressed a wish to follow him thither.

The disciples desired above all things that their Master should enter Jerusalem at the head of a great band of followers, for then they thought that all the people of the city would also rise up and follow him, and that the chief priests and Pharisees would be convinced that he was the Messiah.

Jesus himself knew that it would be very different from this, and that the people of Jerusalem would reject him and put him to death, and this he often told his disciples, but they could not believe it, and were full of high hopes and expectations.

Seventy Sent on Ahead.

Many preparations were made for the march up to Jerusalem, for the number of those who desired to accompany Jesus was very great, and he chose out seventy of his followers and sent them on in front by two and two, to give notice of his coming to the people of the towns and villages through which he must pass, and prepare them to receive so great a host. As before, when the twelve were sent out, they were to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to proclaim the kingdom of God.

The first part of the journey was by water as far as the southern shore of the Lake of Galilee, and looking back from the ship, Jesus gazed for the last time on the country he had loved so well. The clear, beautiful waters of the lake were lit up with the rays of the setting sun, which glowed upon the red sails of the fishing boats; all along its shores nestled the towns and villages where he had preached and labored; his own city of Capernaum lay before him in the distance like a garden of trees and flowers.

It was indeed a lovely scene, but the heart of Jesus was filled with grief. He had come to bring these people a message from God, to teach them a truth far nobler and purer than anything they had ever before known, and they had heard it with indifference.

The Doomed Cities.

As an earthly deliverer they were indeed willing to receive him, and for the miracles which he did they would follow him from place to place, but for the deliverance from sin which he offered them, they cared nothing.

As he looked back and thought of all this, tears filled his eyes, and words of terrible warning burst from his lips. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! he said, Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.

After leaving the lake of Galilee, Jesus intended to pass through the country of Samaria, but as he approached the first Samaritan village, the messengers who had gone before to prepare the people for his coming, came back to say that they would not receive him, because he was going to Jerusalem.

This was on account of the quarrel

between the Jews and the Samaritans, and when the disciples heard of it, they were very angry. James and John especially, were filled with indignation at this insult to their Master, and they said to him, Master, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did?

But Jesus rebuked them, saying, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And he turned away to another village, crossing the Jordan, and taking the other road to Jerusalem, through the country of Peræa.

The Lepers Healed.

As he was going through that district, it happened one day that he was nearing a certain village, when he saw at a distance ten men who were lepers. They stood afar off, because of the law which obliged lepers to keep away from all other men, but they lifted up their voices and cried, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Jesus cried out to them in answer, Go and show yourselves to the priest.

They knew well what this meant. It meant that he had healed them, and that they were to go and have their recovery certified by the priest according to the law of Moses. They set out, therefore, and on the way it became evident that the disease had left them.

Then one of the ten, as soon as he perceived this, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down at the feet of Jesus, giving him thanks, for now he was free to come near him.

This man was a Samaritan, and Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.

On another day, Jesus was about to enter a certain city towards evening, and the women of the place, who had heard of his coming from the messengers sent on in front, assembled together and brought out their young children that he should bless them.

Jesus was wearied with his journey, and when the disciples saw the crowd of women waiting for him, they rebuked them, and told them that they must not trouble the Master.

But Jesus was angry with the disciples for wishing to send them away, and he said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Help for a Poor Woman.

As he journeyed through the country of Peræa, Jesus entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath days to teach the people, according to his custom.

On one of these days, it happened that there was a woman in the synagogue who had been afflicted for eighteen years with an infirmity that caused her to be bowed down to the earth, so that she could not hold herself upright.

When Jesus saw her, he called her to come near to him, and said, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Then he laid his hands upon her and healed her, and immediately she became straight, and glorified God.

But when the ruler of the synagogue saw what was done, he was filled with indigna-

tion, and said to the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.

He spoke in a spirit of tyranny and selfishness, and Jesus rebuked him, and asked whether every one of the people who were present, was not accustomed on the Sabbath to take his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And if it was right to show mercy to animals on the Sabbath, who could say that he had done wrong in showing mercy to this poor woman?

When he had said these things, all his enemies were ashamed, and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Not long after this, it happened that Jesus was invited to dine at the house of a Pharisee upon the Sabbath day. As usual, the doors were open to the street, and while the feast was going on, there entered a man who was afflicted with a disease called the dropsy.

JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

The Pharisees watched to see what Jesus would do, and he, knowing that they objected to his healing on the Sabbath day, gave them an opportunity of saying why they thought it wrong to do so. Is it lawful, he asked, to

heal on the Sabbath, or not? But they did not answer, and he healed the man, and sent him away. Then he said, Which of you, having an ox or an ass that had fallen into a pit, would not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?

Still they kept silence, for they had no answer to make, and turning away from that subject, Jesus went on to speak a parable. He had noticed how each of them, on arriving, had tried to secure for himself the seat intended for the most honored guest, and he wished to teach them a lesson of humility.

The Pharisee and Publican.

Two men, he said, went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

After this, as they were still talking about the giving of feasts, Jesus said to his host, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

One of the guests then began to speak of the future life, and of the blessedness of those who should attain to the kingdom of God, and Jesus told them that all men were called upon to enter into this kingdom, although but few cared to avail themselves of the offer.

All Excused Themselves.

A certain man, he said, made a great supper, and bade many, and sent out his servants at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

But they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it. I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.

The country of Peræa, through which Jesus was now passing, was a rich land, where the people owned large flocks of sheep, and great barns in which they stored up the fruits of the earth.

Jesus often warned them that a man's true life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses, and he spoke much at this time of a certain gift of God which he called eternal life, the best of all blessings.

ROBBERS LYING IN WAIT.

One day, as he was journeying, a young man came running quickly towards him. He was a ruler and belonged to the party of the Pharisees, but he was not, like most of them, too proud to be taught; and throwing himself at the feet of Jesus, he asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Jesus answered, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. The young man asked which, and when Jesus had repeated some of the Ten Commandments, he said, All these I have kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?

It had been an upright and a beautiful life, and as Jesus looked upon the young man,

he felt his heart kindle with love to him. If thou wilt be perfect, he said, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

But when the young man heard that, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, and he could not make up his mind to give them all up, and begin a life of poverty and toil.

Soon afterwards, as Jesus was teaching, a certain lawyer stood up and asked him the same question, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

As in the case of the young ruler, Jesus referred the man to the Commandments, and asked him what he found in the book of the Law. The man answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thy thyself.

Thou hast answered right, said Jesus. This do, and thou shalt live.

But the lawyer knew that he had not loved his neighbor as himself, and so, pretending not to understand the Commandment, he said to Jesus, Who is my neighbor?

Jesus wanted to show him that he was not so ignorant as he tried to appear, and so he spoke a parable, and said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

THE PRIEST AND LEVITE PASSING BY THE WOUNDED MAN.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN. 423

And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, but when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a certain Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

And on the morrow, when he was departing from the inn, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves? The lawyer answered, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise.

On the Mount of Olives.

Some time had been spent in journeying through the country of Peræa, and winter had now come on. The Feast of the Dedication of the temple, which was one of the lesser feasts of the Jews, was at hand, and as Jesus desired to go quietly once more to Jerusalem before entering the city at the head of the multitude, he determined to take his disciples only up to the feast, leaving the rest of the people behind.

He promised them that at the next Passover, in the spring time, he would lead them up to Jerusalem, and meanwhile they remained in Peræa, or else returned to their own homes.

The noise and bustle of crowded cities was always distasteful to Jesus, who loved the calm and the quiet of the country; and when he came up to Jerusalem, he never slept within the walls. When he had ended his day's work of teaching the people, he would leave the city in the evening with his disciples, and spend the night either in the open air on the neighboring Mount of Olives, or else in a village called Bethany, which was about two miles off.

The House at Bethany.

In this village of Bethany, there lived a family of three persons, two sisters and a brother, who loved and honored Jesus, and always made him welcome at their house. Their names were Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. Jesus was staying with them at this time, for as it was now winter, it was too cold for sleeping out of doors.

The two sisters were very unlike one another. Martha was active and clever, and she delighted in busying herself with prepations for doing honor to their Guest. Mary, on the other hand, was of a quieter disposition, and to her there was no greater joy than to sit at the feet of Jesus, and listen to his words.

It seemed to Martha that her sister did not take quite her full share of the necessary work, and one day when Mary was sitting as usual at the feet of Jesus, while she herself was busy, she said to him, Master, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.

But Jesus answered her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

Each morning, Jesus left the peaceful house at Bethany and made his way into Jerusalem, where he spent the day in teaching the people. As he was walking one day in one of the corridors of the temple, the

THE GOOD SHEPHERD DIVIDING THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS.

Jews came round him, saying, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

Jesus did not give them any direct answer, for he knew that the one thought they had about the Messiah was that he would lead them against the Romans, but he told them that the works he did would answer their question, and then he went on to speak by a parable, trying to make them understand that he had a better gift to offer them than victory over their enemies.

The Sheep Hear His Voice.

I am the Good Shepherd, he said. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish and no one shall pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

At these words the Jews interrupted him, crying out that he had spoken blasphemy, and as before, they took up stones to cast at him, for they said that he, being a man, was making himself God.

But Jesus reminded them of a passage in the Psalms in which men had been spoken of as gods, and as the children of the Most High; and he said, If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.

But they only sought the more to kill him, and Jesus was obliged to leave them. He escaped out of their hands, and went back again to the region of Peræa on the other side of the Jordan, where he had left the people a short time before.

For some time Jesus remained in Peræa, and the people whom he had left there gathered round him as before. Many also of the men of the country believed on him, remembering how John, who had baptized in this region, had pointed him out as the Messiah, and had told them to prepare for his coming.

But a sad event took him back for a short time to the neighborhood of Jerusalem. Lazarus, who had so often received him at his house at Bethany, was smitten down with sickness, and one day, when Jesus was teaching the people, he received a message from the two sisters, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.

Jesus was grieved to hear of the trouble of his friends, and determined to go to them, but he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. Moreover, being much occupied with the people, he remained for two days longer in the same place where he was.

Death of Lazarus.

On the third day, he said to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

The disciples tried to dissuade him, reminding him that only a few weeks before the Jews had sought to kill him. Besides, they said, if Lazarus could sleep, he would recover without the presence of Jesus.

Then he told them plainly that Lazarus was dead. He said also that it was right for him to go to Bethany, and that when a man follows the light which shows him the

path of duty, no real harm can come to him.

He set out, therefore, on the third day, but paused when he came to the entrance of the village. By this time, Lazarus had been dead four days, and as is the custom in the East, he had been put into the grave on the very day of his death. Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem; and Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, being well known in the city, many of their friends from Jerusalem had come out to comfort the two sisters concerning the death of their brother.

The New Life.

Jesus did not care to go to the crowded house, so he remained outside the village, sending word to Martha and Mary that he was there. Martha immediately hurried out to meet him, and cried out in her anguish, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died.

Jesus said unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

She answered, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day.

Jesus said, I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

She did not know exactly what his words meant, but she knew that she loved and trusted him, and was sure that anything he told her must be true, and she answered, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Then she thought of her sister, sorrowing alone in the house, and she went back to fetch her. Going up to the side of Mary, she whispered in her ear, so that no one else should hear it, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

As soon as Mary heard that, she rose quickly, and went out to the place beyond the village where Jesus still was. The friends who had been trying to comfort her, saw her leave the house, and followed her, thinking she was going to the grave to weep there. But Mary did not heed them. There was only one friend who could give her any real comfort, and her whole heart was set upon seeing him.

She hurried forward until she reached him, and then, with a fresh burst of tears, she threw herself at his feet, saying, as Martha had done, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. That was the one thought that had filled both their minds during these four long days of mourning.

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, and when he saw Mary weeping at his feet, and the Jews that came with her, weeping also, he was overcome with anguish, and groaned in his spirit. Presently he said, Show me where ye have laid him.

They led the way, and he followed, weeping, while the friends said one to another, Behold, how he loved him! Some of them, however, were surprised that he who had been one of the dearest friends of Jesus should thus be cut off in the flower of his age, and they said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that Lazarus should not have died?

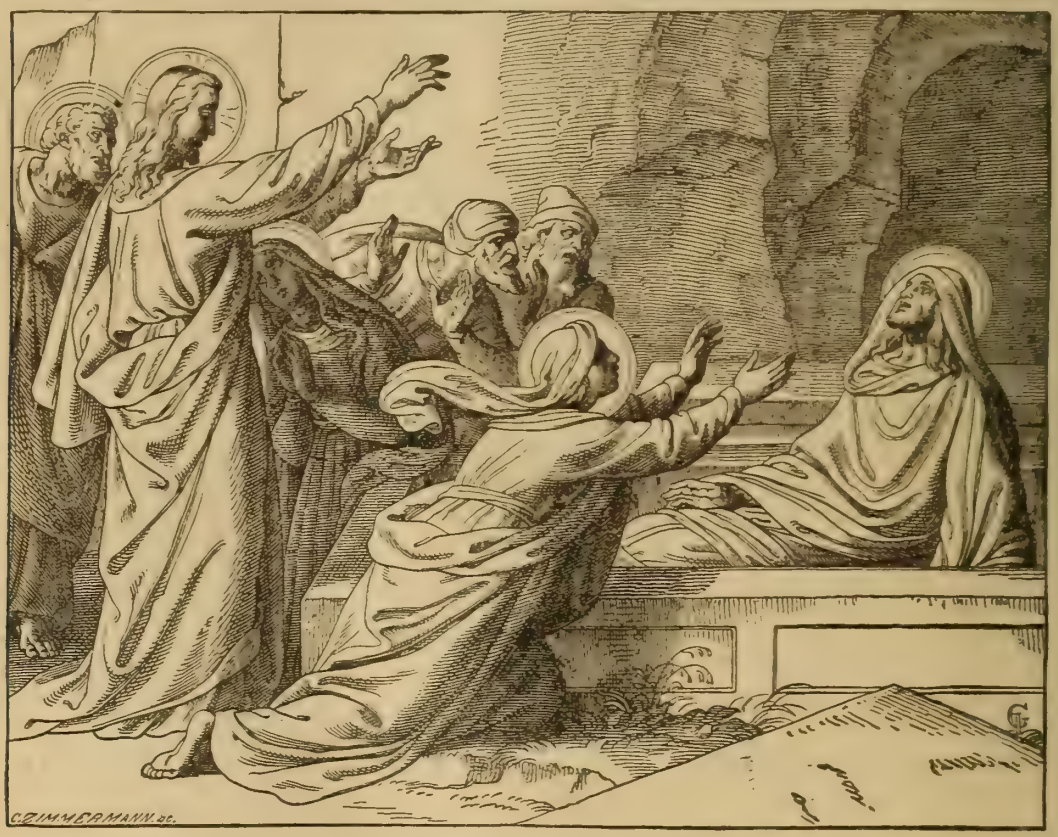
"Lazarus, Come Forth!"

By this time they had come to the grave, which was a recess hewn out of a rock, with a large stone slab in front, to cover it. Again Jesus groaned in himself, and then he said, Take ye away the stone.

Martha was at first unwilling to have this done, but when Jesus repeated his wish, she yielded. When it was accomplished, Jesus

lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father I thank thee that thou heardest me. Then with a loud voice, he cried out, Lazarus, come forth!

As before in Galilee, so here in Judæa, that voice reached the ears of the dead man. Those who were standing round the grave saw a sight which to their dying day they never forgot. From out of the tomb, which



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

for four days had been closed up, there came a figure, bound round and round with grave-clothes, his feet and his hands tied together, and his face covered with a napkin. It was Lazarus, and Jesus told them to unfasten the grave-clothes that he might move freely.

A great number of Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary, but now there was no more need for consolation. The sorrow of the sisters had been turned into joy, their brother was restored to them alive and well, and the friends left them and went back to Jerusalem, many of them believing in Jesus.

The news of the miracle that had been wrought, soon came to the ears of the Pharisees, who heard it with much alarm, for they were afraid that soon all the people would believe in Jesus. They summoned a council, and having considered the matter, they determined to put him to death.

He had done no wrong, but they were afraid of him. They knew that great numbers of the people already looked upon him as the Messiah, and they supposed that sooner or later he would allow them to

crown him king. This they were determined to resist, for they did not believe in him. They had hardened their hearts, and persisted in thinking that the Messiah, when he came, would be a mighty emperor, not such a one as Jesus, who made himself the least of all and the servant of all.

Moreover, he was their enemy, for he had openly rebuked their pride and their hypocrisy. They hated him, and he must die. It was better, they said, that one man should perish, than that the whole nation should be plunged into strife and discord.

The cowardly resolution was passed, and before they separated, the Pharisees issued a decree, that if any man knew where Jesus was to be found, he was to come and tell them, that they might take him prisoner.

In the Wilderness.

In consequence of this, Jesus was again obliged to leave the neighborhood of Jerusalem. The village of Bethany was too near for him to remain there in safety, and he went away to a lonely part of the country, called the Wilderness of Ephraim.

Here he spent some time alone with his disciples, but the spring-time was now approaching, and with it the great Feast of the Passover. Jesus had promised the multitude who had followed him from Galilee, that at this time he would return into Peræa and lead them up from thence to Jerusalem; and though he knew well that the chief priests would put him to death, he did not hesitate for a moment to do as he had said.

He left the wilderness of Ephraim, and descended into the plain, near the city of Jericho. There the people again gathered round him, and he led them towards the city.

Just round Jericho, the country was green and fresh and beautiful, for it was watered by unfailing springs, so that there was never any drought. All manner of stately trees grew around the city, many of them laden with fruit, and the fields and gardens were so fair and sweet, that the place was sometimes called the Paradise of God.

But there was one poor man to whom the lovely scene around him brought no delight, for he was blind. His name was Bartimæus, and as he could not work for his bread, he sat all day long by the wayside, begging.

Their Eyes Were Opened.

Sitting there as usual one day, he heard the sound of a great multitude passing by, and asked what it meant. They told him that Jesus of Nazereth was drawing near, on his way to Jerusalem, and then Bartimæus remembered how he had heard that Jesus had cured many that were blind and lame and otherwise afflicted. It was an opportonity not to be lost, and, lifting up his voice, he cried aloud, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!

The people who were in front rebuked him, and told him to hold his peace and not trouble the Master, but he only cried out so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!

When Jesus heard the cry, he stood still, and commanded the man to be brought near, and some of the multitude went forward to fetch him. They told him that Jesus had sent for him, and he rose with eager haste, casting aside his long upper garment that he might not be hindered in his movements. Another blind man who had been sitting by his side went with him, and they were brought unto Jesus, who said to Bartimæus, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?

The blind man answered, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight, thy

faith hath saved thee. Then he touched his eyes and those of the other blind man, and immediately their eyes were opened.

They were filled with joy and thankfulness, and joining in the crowd of people, they also followed Jesus, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise in like manner unto God.

The road from Jericho to Jerusalem led up a steep mountain pass, and as the journey occupied about six hours, it was necessary to rest and sleep at Jericho before beginning to make the ascent.

Now there lived at Jericho a certain man named Zacchæus, who had heard much of Jesus, and longed to see him. He was a rich man, but he did not dare to invite the great Teacher to his house, on account of his occupation, for he was a publican or tax-gatherer, and was looked down upon in consequence by the rest of the Jews.

Zacchæus In a Tree.

He went out into the streets and mingled with the crowd who entered the city in advance of Jesus, but being little of stature, he found himself at a disadvantage, and so he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree. He knew that Jesus would have to pass that way, and thought that he should thus see him as he went by.

As Jesus passed under the tree, he looked up, and called to Zacchæus by name. Zacchæus, make haste and come down, he said, for to-day I must abide at thy house.

It was a great honor to the despised publican, and all the people murmured, for they called the publicans sinners, and said that Jesus was going to be the guest of a man that was a sinner. But Zacchæus cared little for what they said. He was filled with joy when he heard the words of Jesus, and made haste to come down from the tree and prepare a feast worthy of the great occasion.

A Son of Abraham.

While the feast was going on, many new thoughts entered the mind of Zacchæus, and as he looked at the Guest who was seated beside him, and listened to his words, he was filled with a longing desire to prove himself worthy of the honor that had been vouchsafed to him, and to forsake his former sins, and begin a new and better life.

As a publican he had often been guilty of cheating and extortion, but now he would be strictly honest in all his dealing, and instead of taking from others, he would make amends to those whom he had wronged, and would give to those in need.

He was not ashamed to let others know of his altered purpose, and standing up before all the assembled guests, he said, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Then Jesus was glad, for he saw that Zacchæus had truly repented of his sins, and was acting like a worthy descendant of his great forefather Abraham. He said, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Zacchæus was a happy man that day.

THE CHILDREN.
Bring them into the sunshine,
Out of the gloomy night;
Out of the perilous places—
Bring them into the light.
Show them the pathway of duty,
That upward their feet may tread;
That "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,"
May still, as of old, be said.

"SUFFER THEM TO COME UNTO ME."

THE BREAD THAT COMETH DOWN FROM HEAVEN.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JESUS AT BETHANY—ANOINTING IN THE HOUSE OF MARTHA, MARY AND LAZARUS—ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM—ROAD STREWN WITH PALM-BRANCHES—CHILDREN IN THE TEMPLE—THE MAN WHO HAD A VINEYARD—DISPUTING WITH THE PHARISEES—THE TRIBUTE-MONEY—THE FATE OF HYPOCRITES—THE POOR WIDOW—VIVID PICTURE OF THE SECOND COMING.

PROCEEDING on his journey, Jesus, on the next morning, led his followers up the steep and rocky path that ascends from Jericho to Jerusalem, and ends upon the Mount of Olives. Almost at the summit lies the little village of Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. At this place Jesus halted, for he was going to pass the night there with his disciples, but all the rest of the people went on at once into Jerusalem.

The following day was the Sabbath, and Jesus remained quietly at Bethany. In the evening, his friends made a supper for him, and amongst those who sat beside him at the table was Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

Martha was busily engaged in serving her guests, but Mary was unemployed, and her thoughts went back to the last time that Jesus had been with them at Bethany. He had come to them then at the time of their greatest sorrow, and his presence had turned their sorrow into joy.

Her eyes rested by turns upon the brother who had been raised from the dead, and upon the Friend who had restored him to life, and her heart overflowed with love and gratitude. She felt that it would be right and fitting to offer him the best of all her treasures; and rising up from her place, she fetched an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it over his head as he sat at meat.

The Fragrant Ointment.

The whole house was filled with the delicious fragrance of the ointment, and thus the attention of all who were present, was drawn to the act of Mary.

Many of the guests were astonished, some were displeased, and one of them, Judas Iscariot, the disciple who afterwards betrayed his Master, even ventured to rebuke her, saying, Why was this waste of the ointment made? It might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor.

This he said, not because he cared for the poor, but because he cared a great deal for money, and could not bear to see a chance of making money thrown away. Any gifts that were brought to Jesus, or any sums that were gained by the disciples, were put into a common purse, and this purse was kept by Judas. He liked to know that it was well filled, and he even went further than this, for he was a thief, and out of the purse that was intended to be drawn upon only for the good of all, he did not hesitate to take money when he needed it for his own purposes, without telling anyone.

But Jesus would not allow him to rebuke Mary, and he silenced the murmurs of those

MARY OF BETHANY ANOINTING THE FEET OF JESUS.

who were blaming her in their hearts, by giving her his blessing and approval. Why trouble ye the woman? He said. She hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.

Anointing for Burial.

Then he again referred to that which he had already so often told them, namely, that soon he would be taken away from them, and put to death. It was the custom among the Jews to pour precious ointments and spices upon the dead bodies of their friends, and Jesus told them that they might look upon him as already a dead man, and think of Mary as anointing him for his burial.

It had been an act of noble generosity to give him thus of her best without stint or calculation, and he said, Verily I say unto you, wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

The day after the supper was the first day of the week, answering to our Sunday, and this was the day on which at last the triumph of Jesus was to take place. He was to enter into Jerusalem accompanied by the multitude who had followed him from Galilee, and now, the disciples thought, the men of Jerusalem would surely be convinced. and be ready to acknowledge that Jesus was their long-expected Messiah.

Early in the morning, Jesus sent forward two of his disciples, and told them to go into the next village, where, he said, they would find an ass and a colt tied together. These they were to unloose and bring to him, and if any one saw them and asked them why they were doing this, they were to say, The Lord hath need of them.

The disciples did as they were commanded, and brought back the ass and colt, that Jesus might ride in state into the city. It had been the custom in the East for kings and great men to ride upon asses on grand occasions, and the disciples remembered how one of the old prophets had written, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

The followers of Jesus had come out from the city to meet him, and when they saw him riding towards them on the colt, they shouted aloud for joy, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

Some of them tore off their upper garments and spread them out in front of the ass that their King might have a carpet to ride over, and others climbed up into the trees beside the road, and cut down branches of palm-leaves, which they strewed before him.

The Beautiful City.

When they had reached the top of the Mount of Olives, and were come within sight of Jerusalem, Jesus paused. There before them lay the beautiful city with her gorgeous temple, her golden roofs, her towers, her palaces glittering in the sunshine of the bright spring morning—Jerusalem, "the joy of the whole earth."

But the sight brought no pleasure to the eyes of Jesus, for as he gazed upon it, he thought of the sins of the people and of the terrible punishment that was awaiting them. Looking forward into the future, he saw a vision of a city besieged by enemies, conquered, at last destroyed—her citizens dying of hunger, her streets running with

blood, her beautiful temple in ruins. He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes! For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

After this, Jesus continued his triumph, riding down the hill into the city. Some of the multitude ran on before, and others followed behind him, and as they went they sang, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!

Thus they entered Jerusalem, and all the city was moved, and came out to see what was going on, asking, Who is this?

The multitude answered, It is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. And as before, they waved their palms, and shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David!

CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

But the people of Jerusalem merely looked on; they did not join in the possession as the disciples had expected, and some of the Pharisees who were among the crowd, even came to Jesus and said unto him,

Master, rebuke thy disciples. He would not do this, but answered them, saying, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

On he rode, until he came to the very gates of the temple itself, and there a number of boys, who were being trained to become priests, caught up the words of the multitude, and began to sing with them, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Again the chief priests and Pharisees tried to interfere, for they were much displeased, and they came up to Jesus and asked him, Hearest thou what these say?

But he answered, Yea. Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?

Driving Out the Money-Changers.

Once before, at the time of the Feast of the Passover, Jesus had cleared away from the temple the changers of money, and the sellers of sheep and oxen and doves. Now they had ventured to return, and finding that this was so, he drove them out again, saying, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Then he dismissed the people, and the triumph of the day was over. It had been as Jesus had foretold. The people of Jerusalem had not come forth to meet him—they were not willing to acknowledge him as the Messiah. The opportunity had been given to them, but they had rejected it. Only some blind and lame people came to Jesus as he was teaching in the temple, and he healed them.

In the evening, he left the city with his disciples, and went out to spend the night upon the Mount of Olives.

Jesus went again into the temple on the next morning, and began to teach the people. But while he was doing so, he was interrupted by some of the chief priests and Pharisees, who came up to him, and said, By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority? They were referring to his triumphant entry into Jerusalem the day before, and to his cleansing of the temple from the buyers and sellers.

A Puzzling Question.

It was by no means the first time that they had asked Jesus a similar question, and he always referred them to his works as a sign that he had the authority of one who was sent by God, but now he was willing to remind them of what John the Baptist had said about him. He began therefore by asking if they were willing to admit the testimony of John. The baptism of John, he said, whence was it, from heaven, or of men?

The question perplexed them, and they did not know what to answer. If they admitted that John had been sent by God, Jesus would ask them why they did not believe what John had said about him; and on the other hand, they did not dare to say that John had not been sent by God, because of the people, for all the people believed that John was a true prophet.

They were obliged to say, We cannot tell, and Jesus answered, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Then he went on to tell them a parable of a certain man who had two sons, and who told them both to go and work in his vineyard. The first answered roughly, I will not, but afterwards he repented of his disobedience, and went. The second met his father with apparent respect, and answered, I go, sir, but he went not.

Jesus asked the Pharisees which of those two sons was he who did the will of his

THE CHILDREN IN THE TEMPLE.

father, and they answered, The first. Then he told them that they themselves were like the second son, pretending to do the will of God, but really disobeying it, and that the publicans and sinners whom they despised, were nearer to the kingdom of heaven than themselves, because they were ready to repent of their former sins.

The Vineyard of the Lord.

After this he told them another parable. This time also it was a story of a man who had a vineyard. He made a hedge round it to protect it from thieves and wild beasts, and he built a tower and a winepress, that nothing should be wanting. Then he gave it into the charge of some husbandmen whom he employed to take care of it, and went away into a far country.

When the time drew near for the fruit to be ripe, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive from them the fruits of the vineyard. But instead of delivering over the fruit, the husbandmen ill-treated his servants; they beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did unto them likewise.

Last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

Then Jesus asked the Pharisees what the lord of the vineyard would do to those husbandmen when he came back from his far journey; and they answered, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

They did not at first perceive that the parable had been spoken against themselves, but they might have known it, for a parable very like it had long ago been spoken by the prophet Isaiah, and this is the explanation that he had given of it. The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, he said, is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression, and for righteousness, but behold a cry.

When Jesus had ended his parable, he said to the Pharisees, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof; and then they saw that by the answer they had given, they had condemned themselves. They were now more desirous than ever to put him to death, but they were afraid as yet to lay hands on him because of the people, for all the people believed that Jesus was a prophet of the Lord.

Trying to Entrap Him.

As before, Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives with his disciples, and returned the next morning to the temple.

Meanwhile, the chief priests and Pharisees had made a plot with the followers of King Herod to ask Jesus a question, by which they hoped to lead him into saying something that would give offence either to the people, or to their Roman conquerors. They came, pretending that they wished for his advice, and asked him, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

Cæsar was the Roman Emperor, who had conquered the Jews and compelled them to pay him taxes, in return for which he kept order in the country, protected them from other enemies, and appointed a king to administer the laws. The question of the Pharisees was altogether insincere, and was only

asked in the hope that it would create a difficulty for Jesus, from which he would find it hard to escape.

If he were to say, It is not right to pay the tribute, then he would be arrested as a preacher of sedition. If, on the other hand, he were to say, It is right to do so, then the people would no longer believe in him, for they still hoped that Jesus was going to lead them against the Romans.

But Jesus knew the wickedness of the Pharisees, and he answered, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money.

Paying Tribute.

From out of the pouch of his robe, one of them drew a silver penny, worth about thirty-six cents of our money. On one side of the coin was the beautiful proud face of Tiberius Cæsar, the Roman Emperor; on the other side was his superscription, Pontifex Maximus (Greatest High Priest).

Whose is this image and superscription? asked Jesus. They said unto him Cæsar's.

Render therefore to Cæsar, was his answer to their question, the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

At these words they marvelled, and left him, and went away. As long as they used the coin of Cæsar, and thus acknowledged him as their rightful ruler, it was clearly their duty to pay him the tribute he required; and thus their plot to draw Jesus into saying whether or not he was their rightful lord had entirely broken down.

Later on in the day, another of the Pharisees asked him a further question: Master, he said, which is the great commandment of the Law? He asked this more from idle curiosity to know what Jesus would say, than from any desire to be taught, but the question drew forth a never-to-be-forgotten answer from the lips of him who spoke as never man spake.

He said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

It was the same answer that he had given to the young man who once asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, and the same lesson that he had taught in the Sermon on the Mount—namely, that God looks not only at the actions of men, but also at the very thoughts of their hearts, and that he only can hope to keep God's commandments whose heart is filled with love to him, and also with love to his fellow-men.

All the rest of that day, Jesus continued in the temple, teaching the people, but he was constantly disturbed by some interruption from the Pharisees. The Sadducees also, who formed another party of the chief men, came to him with foolish questions, hoping that he would say something that would give them an excuse for placing him under arrest.

But Jesus answered all their questions with heavenly wisdom, and they could find nothing of which to accuse him.

Strict Rules for Other People.

Towards the end of the day, which was the last he ever spent in Jerusalem, Jesus began to warn the people against the Pharisees. They were the teachers of the Law, and the men who of all others were considered the most religious and most worthy of respect, but they were hypocrites.

They made strict rules for other people, which they did not attempt to observe themselves, and all their good works they did

only to be seen of men. They went about with phylacteries—pieces of parchment on which passages of the Law had been written—bound round their heads or sewn upon the borders of their garments, and they loved to occupy the foremost seats in the synagogue and the best places at all feasts, and to receive marks of deference from others; but they did nothing to deserve respect.

Jesus told the people that they were to listen to the words of the Scribes and Pharisees, for they were the words of the Law of God, but that they must avoid copying their actions, for, he said, they say, and do not.

Woe Pronounced Against Hypocrites.

Then he pronounced upon them seven awful curses. For their love of money, for their false zeal, for their perversion of the truth, for their attention to minor matters and neglect of the more important duties, for their obedience to the letter rather than the spirit of the Law, for their outward show of goodness and their inward rottenness, for their display of deference for the memories of the prophets whom their fathers had killed whilst they themselves had in every respect the spirit of those who killed the prophets, he repeated seven times over these terrible words, Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

And then, thinking of the people whom they led astray, and of the beautiful city that would be made desolate for their sins, he cried out with infinite tenderness, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. These were almost the last words that Jesus ever uttered in the temple.

When they were ended, he rose to leave it for the last time, but on his way out, he paused for a few moments in the court called the Treasury. In this place there stood thirteen great chests shaped like trumpets, which were placed there to receive the offerings of the people.

The Widow's Mite.

Jesus sat down and watched the people as they came to offer their gifts, and he saw that many that were rich cast in much. Presently there came also a poor widow who had only two mites, which together make a farthing, but this, as she had no more, she was not ashamed to offer, and Jesus saw it with approving eyes. He called his disciples unto him. and said, Verily I say unto you, this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have out of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God, but she of her want hath cast in all the living that she had.

Then he turned and left the temple, and as they went, the disciples called his attention to the beautiful stones and marbles, for which the collection in the Treasury was made. But Jesus was too sad to take any pleasure in them, and he only answered, The days will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

They were going as usual towards the Mount of Olives, and as soon as they had left the city behind them, the disciples asked Jesus what he had meant by these words, and when these things would come to pass.

He told them that many troubles were in store for them, and for their whole nation. They would see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, and there would be great distress all over the land. There would be wars, and rumors of wars, and earthquakes

in divers places, and famines and pestilences.

They themselves would suffer persecution, and would be tormented and killed, but he that should endure unto the end, the same should be saved. They would not be forsaken, and moreover, their Master would return again in the clouds of heaven, and then he would reward every man according to his works. This was the thought that was to comfort them in their troubles, and for this second coming of the Son of Man they were to watch earnestly and pray continually.

Lastly, he drew a picture of that second coming. When the Son of Man, he said, shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave the drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in, or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. He taught that by doing good to his followers they were doing good to him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A Plot to Put Jesus to Death—Feast of the Passover—Preparations for the Last Supper—Jesus Washing the Feet of his Disciples—In the Garden of Gethsemane—A Prayer of Agony—The Traitor's Kiss—False Witnesses—Jesus Before the High Priest—Denial of Peter—Sorrowful End of Judas—Jesus Before Pilate—A Furious Mob—The Purple Robe and Crown of Thorns.

RESOLVED upon getting rid of this new Teacher and Prophet, the chief priests and Pharisees held a meeting at the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest, to consult as to when and how they should put him to death. At this time, Jerusalem was full of strangers who had assembled for the great Feast of the Passover, and many of these were men from Galilee, who believed in Jesus. The chief priests decided therefore to wait until the Passover should be over before they made any attempt against him, and in any case they agreed that it would be better to find some opportunity of seizing him quietly, lest there should be a tumult among the people.

Whilst they were plotting this wickedness, they received a message that a certain man wished to speak with them, and desired that he should be admitted. It was Judas Iscariot, a disciple of Jesus, he who had been chosen to be one of the twelve Apostles, but who was now secretly a thief, stealing out of the purse common to all, the money he needed for his own uses.

This man had made up his mind to sell his Master, and he came to the chief priests and said, What will ye give me, and I will betray him unto you? They agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver, and in return for this, Judas promised that at some convenient moment, when Jesus was alone, with only his twelve disciples round him, he would steal away from them, and would go to the chief priests to tell them where he was, and how they could best take him prisoner.

The Arch-Traitor.

Never since the world began, has a blacker crime been committed; and from the day on which the Apostle betrayed his Master, the name of "the traitor Judas" has been handed down with horror and loathing through all the centuries. Good had it been for that man if he had never been born!

For the next two days—Wednesday and Thursday in Passion Week, as we now call them—Jesus remained quietly at Bethany, without going to teach in the temple according to his custom.

The great Feast of the Passover was at hand, which was kept in remembrance of the time when the children of Israel had been delivered out of the land of Egypt.

Long ago, the Israelites had been bond-slaves in Egypt. They were obliged to serve the king, who oppressed them, and treated them very cruelly. He required them to make bricks for him, and punished them if they did not work fast enough; and he made a law that every little boy that was born was to be killed immediately.

Then the children of Israel were in great distress, and they cried unto the Lord to deliver them. And the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who went to the king, and desired him to let the people go, that they might lead them away to the land of Canaan.

The Plagues of Egypt.

But the king, whose name was Pharaoh, would not let the people go, so Moses and Aaron again cried unto the Lord, and the Lord punished Pharaoh by sending great plagues upon his land. The river was turned into blood, the country was overrun with frogs and flies and locusts, the cattle died of disease, great storms of hail and thunder and lightning swept over the land, causing great destruction, and for three whole days the earth was covered with darkness.

Still the king would not allow the people to go, and the Lord told Moses that he would visit him with a yet more terrible plague, which would compel him to let them depart.

The Lord said, moreover, that Moses was to speak to the children of Israel, and tell them that the head of every family was to take a lamb a year old, and kill it on the fourteenth day of the month. Then they were to take the blood and smear it over the doorposts of their houses; and the lamb itself they were to roast, and eat in the evening.

The whole family was to eat it together, standing, with their shoes on their feet, their staffs in their hands, and their outdoor garments upon them. For I, said the Lord, will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord forever.

One Dead in Every House.

The children of Israel did as Moses commanded, and it came to pass that at midnight, the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, Rise up and get you gone, and the Egyptians were urgent that they should leave in haste, for they said, We be all dead men.

Thus the children of Israel were delivered from the land of Egypt, and ever afterwards they met together once a year, in remembrance of the time when the Lord had smitten the Egyptians, but had passed over the houses on which the blood of the lamb was sprinkled. As at that first Passover, each family took a lamb and killed it, and ate it all together.

Little did the people think that this present Passover would be remembered as long as the world should last by the offering of a far nobler victim, even the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

It was some time during the second of the two days spent by Jesus at Bethany, that one of his disciples asked him, Master, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat at the Passover?

He told them that he would eat it in Jerusalem, and that Peter and John were to go on before and make all things ready. Go into the city, he said, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. And where he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared. There make ready for us.

The two disciples did as they were commanded, and when they had reached the house, they procured a lamb, and prepared all the other things that would be needed.

In the evening, when it was dark, Jesus left Bethany and came to the house with his disciples; and there in an upper chamber, they ate together the solemn meal.

It was the custom among the Jews to take off their shoes on entering a room, and to wash their feet and hands before eating, but on this occasion the washing had been left undone, for the disciples had been occupied in disputing as to which of them was the greatest and had a right to the most honorable place, and none of them had cared to render this service to the rest.

Jesus therefore determined to teach them

JESUS WASHING THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES.

by his action that which was the lesson of his whole life, namely, that the greatest of all, is he who most truly serves his fellow-men.

He himself, though he knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, and laid aside his upper garment, and took a towel and wound it round him. After that, he poured water into a basin, and, going to the disciples, one by one, he began to wash their feet, and to wipe them with the towel that was round him.

An Example of Humility.

This was usually the work of the humblest slave, and when Jesus came to Simon Peter, the disciple could not bear that his Master should render him this service. He said, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Thou shalt never wash my feet. But Jesus told him that it was his will to do so, and then Peter yielded.

When the feet of all had been washed, Jesus put on his garment and sat down again, and then he explained to them the meaning of what he had done.

He said to them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

After this, the supper continued. All the disciples were present, even Judas among the rest, but Jesus knew the treachery that was in his heart, and as they were eating, he became very sorrowful, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

At these words, the disciples were filled with grief and astonishment, and they looked from one to another, wondering which of them it could be of whom he was speaking. They hardly knew what he meant, but one of them cried out with terror, Master, is it I? And then, one after another, they all said, Is it I? Even Judas followed the rest, and asked, Is it I?

Now it happened that he who was lying upon the couch next to Jesus, was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved above all the rest, and near to him was Simon Peter. The head of John was resting upon the breast of his Master; and Peter, who felt that it was intolerable not to know which of them it was that should do this dreadful deed, beckoned to him to ask Jesus. He did so, and Jesus answered, It is he to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.

The Broken Bread.

Then he took a piece of bread, dipped it in the dish that was in the middle of the table, and gave it to Judas Iscariot. At the same time, knowing that the devil had taken possession of his heart, and that he had hardened himself and would not repent of his evil purpose, he said to him in a low voice, That thou doest, do quickly.

Judas then rose up and went out; and after he had left them, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.

Then he told them that he was going to leave them, but that they were not to be troubled. They believed in God, he said, and must believe also in him. He was going to prepare a place for them in heaven, and the body, yet he would be very near them in spirit, and would comfort them, and give them peace in their hearts.

If ye keep my commandments, he said, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept

CHRIST IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

meanwhile he would send unto them a holy Spirit of truth, who would be their comforter and teacher. He said that it was better for them that he should go away, in order that the Spirit might come to them; and he told them that though he would not be present in my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.

Lastly, he poured out his soul in prayer

to God, asking that the Father would glorify him, and would enable the disciples to understand those things that he had taught them, and to keep themselves pure and free from sin, though they lived in a sinful world. Holy Father, he prayed, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

After this they all rose up, and sang together some of the psalms appointed to be used at the Passover; and then they left the house, and went away to pass the night, as usual, on the Mount of Olives.

The Midnight Agony.

On the Mount of Olives there was a garden, called the Garden of Gethsemane, to which Jesus often went with his disciples. It was to this place that he now led them, and as they were going, he began to tell them how, that night, the Shepherd would be smitten, and the sheep of his flock would be scattered abroad. He was going to be betrayed, he said, into the hands of wicked men, and his disciples would all forsake him and flee away.

Peter could not believe that he should forsake his Master in the hour of danger, and he said, Though all should be offended because of thee, yet will not I. I am ready to follow thee both to prison and to death.

But Jesus answered, I tell thee, Peter, that the cock shall not crow, until thou hast thrice denied that thou knowest me.

When they had come to the garden, Jesus left the rest of the disciples at a certain place, saying to them, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder, and went on, with only the three that he loved the most, Peter and James and John. They were the three who had gone with him to pray on Mount Hermon, when he was transfigured before them; and now that his soul was troubled, he again desired that they only should be with him.

He said to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me. Then he went a little farther, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

The Bitter Cup.

After a time he went back to his disciples, but he did not find them watching. It was now far on into the night; they were weary and heavy, and sleep had overtaken them. He said to Peter, Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Then he went away a second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done.

It was the most awful suffering the world has ever seen, and to the disciples who were at a little distance, it seemed as if great drops of blood fell from him to the ground as he prayed. All the sins of men were pressing upon his soul, the wickedness of his enemies, the treachery of one who had been his friend, the want of understanding of those whom he loved the most, this and much more that we

can but dimly understand. But as he prayed, there came an angel from heaven to strengthen him, and in the strength of that heavenly consolation he again rose, and returned to the disciples.

They had watched for some time, but now they had again fallen asleep, and he went back, without disturbing them, and prayed again as before. When he came the third time, he saw in the distance the gleam of lanterns and heard the clash of swords, and knew that Judas had betrayed his resting-place, and that the soldiers of the chief priests were come to take him.

It was an armed band that now approached the garden, some of the men being servants of the High Priest, and others, Roman soldiers who were acting under his orders. At their head was Judas, who went before to show them the way. He had given a sign to the soldiers, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely. When they reached the place, he hurried forward, and going up to Jesus, he said, Hail Master, and kissed him.

JUDAS BETRAYING JESUS WITH A KISS.

But Jesus said, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss? Then he turned toward the soldiers, and asked them, Whom

seek ye? They said, Jesus of Nazareth. He answered, I am he; and as he spoke these words, they staggered backwards and fell to the ground, overawed by the majesty of his presence.

When they had recovered themselves, he again asked them, Whom seek ye? and when they answered as before, Jesus of Nazareth, he said, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way. Even at that terrible moment he did not forget to think of his disciples, and make sure that they were not also taken prisoners.

Meanwhile the disciples, who were now fully awake, had made some little effort to defend their Master, and Peter had drawn a sword with which he was armed, and had smitten one of the servants of the High Priest, whose name was Malchus, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus touched the man's ear and healed it, and he said to Peter, Put up thy sword into its sheath. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

The Disciples Fled.

Turning again to the soldiers, he said to them, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hands upon me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled, and the soldiers bound Jesus, and led him away to the palace of Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the High Priest, and one of the chief men among the Jews.

Annas asked Jesus various questions about his disciples and his doctrine, but he refused to answer. He said, I spoke openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.

Annas had no legal power to try the prisoner, and therefore he sent on Jesus, still bound to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, the High Priest, at whose house, although it was the middle of the night, the chief priests and the elders and the Scribes were even now sitting in council.

Witnesses Do Not Agree.

The chief priests desired that Jesus should be brought before them, in order that they might try the prisoner whom they had ordered to be arrested.

But though they had made up their minds that he was to be condemned to death, they could find no accusation to bring against him. They sought for some one who would bear witness against him—true or false, they cared not—and many false witnesses came forward; but according to the Jewish law, it was necessary that two witnesses should agree in their statements before any man could be condemned, and none of these agreed together.

At last there came two witnesses, who said, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, made without hands. But even so their statements did not agree, for one of them testified that Jesus had said, I am able to destroy this temple of God, and the other testified that he had said, I will destroy it.

All this time, Jesus answered nothing. He knew that it was of no use to tell them what he had really said, or what he had meant by saying it, and when the High Priest arose and asked him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? He still remained perfectly silent.

This was displeasing to the High Priest, who had hoped that, whatever Jesus might say, he should be able in some way to turn his words against him, and he was determined to break his silence. Standing up in the midst of the assembly, he said to him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Messiah, the Son of God?

This solemn question required an answer, and Jesus answered, I am. And ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Accused of Blasphemy.

At these words, the High Priest rent his clothes as a sign that something terrible had occurred, and cried out, He has spoken blasphemy. Then he said to the rest, What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? They all answered, He is guilty of death.

The great Council of the chief priests and elders had now condemned Jesus to death, but this was not enough, for as their country was under the power of the Romans, the sentence had to be confirmed by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate.

It was still night, and they could not disturb Pilate until the next morning, so they departed for the temple, and meanwhile gave over their prisoner into the hands of the band of servants and soldiers who had arrested him.

Then did these servants and soldiers spit in his face, and buffet him, and did smite him with their hands. The very men who, when they first came to take Jesus prisoner, were so overawed that they went backwards and fell to the ground, now looked upon him merely as a criminal condemned to death, and amused themselves by smiting him and mocking him.

But a harder blow than any that could be smitten by Jewish servant or Roman soldier was to be dealt to Jesus from the hand of a friend that night.

When he was first taken prisoner, all the disciples had forsaken him and fled; but before long, two of them, Peter and John, had in some measure recovered from their terror, and had followed to the palace of the High Priest, to see what would happen to him.

John was known to the servants of the High Priest, and he was able to gain admission for Peter, who went and stood among the servants in the courtyard. The night was chilly, and they had lit a fire of coals, and stood warming themselves, when a certain maid looked steadfastly at Peter, and said, Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

The Sad Denial.

Peter was startled. He was among strangers in a strange place; his Master had been taken prisoner and condemned to death almost in a moment; he did not know what might happen to him if he were confess that he was one of his followers. He was afraid, and his fear made him a liar and a coward. He answered, I know not the man.

Then he changed his place, for fear of further questions, but after a time another maid observed him, and said, This man was also with Jesus of Nazareth. But Peter denied again, saying, I know him not.

A third time the attention of the servants was called to him, for one of them said, Surely thou also art one of them, for thou art a Galilean; thy speech betrayeth thee, and a third time Peter denied. He even began to curse and to swear, saying, I know

not this man of whom ye speak. At this moment the cock crew, and at the same instant some movement in the crowd brought him within sight of Jesus, bound and mocked and buffeted by the rough soldiers. The Lord turned and looked on Peter, and across the memory of the disciple there flashed the recollection of how Jesus had said to him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. In a moment he realized what it was that he had done, and he went out and wept bitterly.

PETER DENYING CHRIST.

In the meantime, another terrible scene was taking place not far off. The chief priests and Pharisees had left the palace after the trial of Jesus, but were still together in the temple, talking over the matter, while they waited for the morning.

Presently there appeared before them a man with bloodshot eyes and dishevelled hair, and a look of despair upon his face. It was Judas, the traitor. I have sinned, he cried, with a hoarse, broken voice, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.

He had heard how they had condemned Jesus to death without an hour's delay, and now the horror of what he had done, had fallen upon him when it was too late. He had come to implore the Pharisees to change their purpose, but it was of no avail. What is that to us? they asked with looks of scorn. See thou to that.

The last time that Judas had stood before them, he had come to bargain for the sum of money for which he should betray his Master. Now the money which he had coveted so greedily had become hateful to him, and he could not bear the sight of it.

He threw down the thirty pieces of silver in front of the chief priests, and then he went away and hanged himself.

When the morning was come, the chief priests and elders returned to the house of Caiaphas, and having again summoned Jesus before them, and confirmed the sentence by which they had pronounced him to be guilty of death, they led him away, bound, to the palace of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor.

Jesus Before Pilate.

Jesus was taken into a gorgeous room, called the Hall of Judgment; but the chief priests remained outside, for it was the time of the Passover, and they considered that they would be defiled and unfit to eat it, if they entered the palace of the heathen.

Pilate, therefore, went out to them in the courtyard in front of the house, and asked, What accusation bring ye against this man?

They had no true accusation to bring, and they knew that Pilate would not condemn him to death upon the accusation of blasphemy, for which they had themselves declared him to be guilty of death, so they cried out, We have found him perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king.

Pilate went back into the Judgment Hall, and said to Jesus, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. But Pilate repeated his question, and then he said, I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.

Then Pilate asked him, What is truth? But without waiting for an answer, he went out again to the chief priests, and said, I find no fault in him.

At these words, they were more furious than ever, and cried out, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judæa, and beginning from Galilee, even unto this place.

Pilate was much perplexed. It appeared to him that Jesus was an innocent man, and he did not wish to shed his blood; at the same time, the Jews were fierce and violent, and he was anxious not to displease them. When he heard them speak of Galilee, and found that Jesus came from that province, he thought it would be a good way out of the difficulty to send him to King Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time.

Pilate's Wife Has a Dream.

Jesus was therefore led to the palace of Herod, who had long wished to see him, because he had heard of his miracles, and hoped that he might do some wonderful work in his presence. But Jesus would not work miracles to satisfy the curiosity of a wicked man, neither would he answer the questions of Herod, who therefore sent him back to Pilate, when he had mocked him and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe.

Again the prisoner was led through the streets to the house of Pilate, and the Governor came out into the courtyard, and sat upon the judgement seat. He had received a message from his wife that she had dreamt a dream about the just man who was standing bound before him, and begged that he would have no hand in shedding his blood.

He was therefore more anxious than ever to release Jesus, but he had not the courage openly to deny the Jews what they desired, and again therefore he thought of a device by which he hoped to accomplish his purpose.

It was a custom among the Jews, that

every year at the Feast of the Passover, one prisoner should be set free, and the people had the right of choosing who it should be. Pilate reminded them of this custom, and not Jesus, but Barabbas, a murderer and a robber.

With one consent they clamored forth, Not this man but Barabbas! And when

THEY CRIED, "CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!"

asked if he should release the King of the Jews. There was now a great crowd of people in the courtyard, but the chief priests and elders stirred up their minds to desire that another prisoner should be released— Pilate asked, What then will ye that I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? the horrible cry arose, Crucify him, crucify him!

As soon as he could obtain silence, Pilate

asked, Why, what evil hath he done? But they only cried out the more exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified.

Pilate was unwilling to condemn Jesus to this terrible death, but it was now more difficult than ever to take the straightforward course which he ought to have adopted at the first, and he again gave way to cowardice, and tried half measures. Hoping that if some lesser punishment were inflicted upon Jesus, the people would be satisfied, he told his soldiers to lead away the prisoner into the hall called the Pretorium, and scourge him.

Arrayed in a Purple Robe.

This was a cruel punishment, and the soldiers did not hesitate to add unnecessary cruelty, and cowardly insults. When the scourging was over, they again arrayed Jesus in the purple robe that Herod had put on him, and they twisted together a crown of thorns which they pressed upon his forehead, while in his hand they placed a reed instead of a sceptre. Then they all passed before him, one by one, and made a mock salute, calling out, Hail, King of the Jews! And as they did so, they spit upon him and smote him with the reed.

After this, they brought him back into the courtyard, faint and bleeding, and still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate hoped that his enemies would now have pity, and would be willing to release him after this torture, but the chief priests had no pity. As soon as they saw him, they cried out again, Crucify him, crucify him! And when Pilate still hesitated, they said, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

"His Blood Be on Us."

Once before, the Jews had written a complaint of Pilate to Tiberius Cæsar, the Emperor under whom he held his office, and he was afraid that if he refused to carry out their wishes, they would again write and accuse him of treachery towards the Emperor, and that then he would be disgraced, and perhaps made prisoner himself.

The conflict between good and evil which had been going on in his heart was now ended. He was conquered by the fear of man, and finding that the chief priests and the multitude whom they had excited were becoming more and more tumultuous, he delivered Jesus over into their hands to be crucified.

But even now he tried to shake off the responsibility of his action, for he knew that he was doing wrong, and he sent for water, and washed his hands before all the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it.

And the people answered him, His blood be upon us and upon our children.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

STORY OF THE CRUCIFIXION—BEARING THE CROSS—A PRAYER FOR ENEMIES—THE EARTHQUAKE AND DARKENING OF THE SUN—VEIL OF THE TEMPLE RENT—THE BURIAL—THE ANGEL AND WOMEN AT THE TOMB—SURPRISE OF THE DISCIPLES—JESUS AT EMMAUS—AGAIN IN GALILEE—THE GREAT DRAUGHT OF FISHES—SOLEMN CHARGE TO PETER—JESUS AT BETHANY—THE ASCENSION—AWE-STRUCK DISCIPLES APPEAR IN THE TEMPLE.

WHEN a man was condemned by the Romans to the cruel death of crucifixion, it was the custom to make him carry the cross on which he was going to suffer, to the place of execution. As soon therefore as Pilate had given his cowardly consent to the demand of the chief priests, the soldiers stripped off from Jesus the gorgeous robe with which they had covered him in scorn, put his own clothes upon him, and laid the cross upon his shoulders.

The place of execution, which was called Golgotha, or Calvary, was outside the city walls, and Jesus went out towards it, bearing his cross, with a great multitude following after him. But he was weak and faint after the sleepless night, the agony in the garden, and all the pain he had already suffered, and he could not carry the heavy cross, so the soldiers seized upon a man named Simon the Cyrenian, whom they chanced to meet, and compelled him to carry the cross instead of Jesus.

The crowd consisted chiefly of the priests and Pharisees, and the people whom they had stirred up to demand the life of Jesus, but there followed also many of those who had known and loved him. Amongst these were a number of women, who wept aloud, and filled the air with their cries of sorrow.

Of his enemies, who were hooting and reviling him, Jesus took no notice, but when he heard the lamentations of the women, he turned towards them, and said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. The multitude had cried, His blood be upon us and on our children, and that innocent blood was going to be avenged upon their nation in rivers of blood, and in horrors of famine and pestilence.

He Prays For His Enemies.

They had now come to the place called Golgotha, or Calvary, and the soldiers took Jesus and nailed his feet and hands to the cross. But even at that moment of terrible pain, no groan escaped from his lips, only a prayer: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Then the cross was raised up and set between two other crosses, on each of which there hung a thief. Over each cross was written the crime for which he who was upon it had been condemned to suffer, and over that of Jesus, were the words, The King of the Jews. He who above all men honored God, had been condemned by the chief priests for blasphemy; he who had made himself the least of all and the servant of all, was condemned by Pilate for claiming to

THE ANGEL AND WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE.

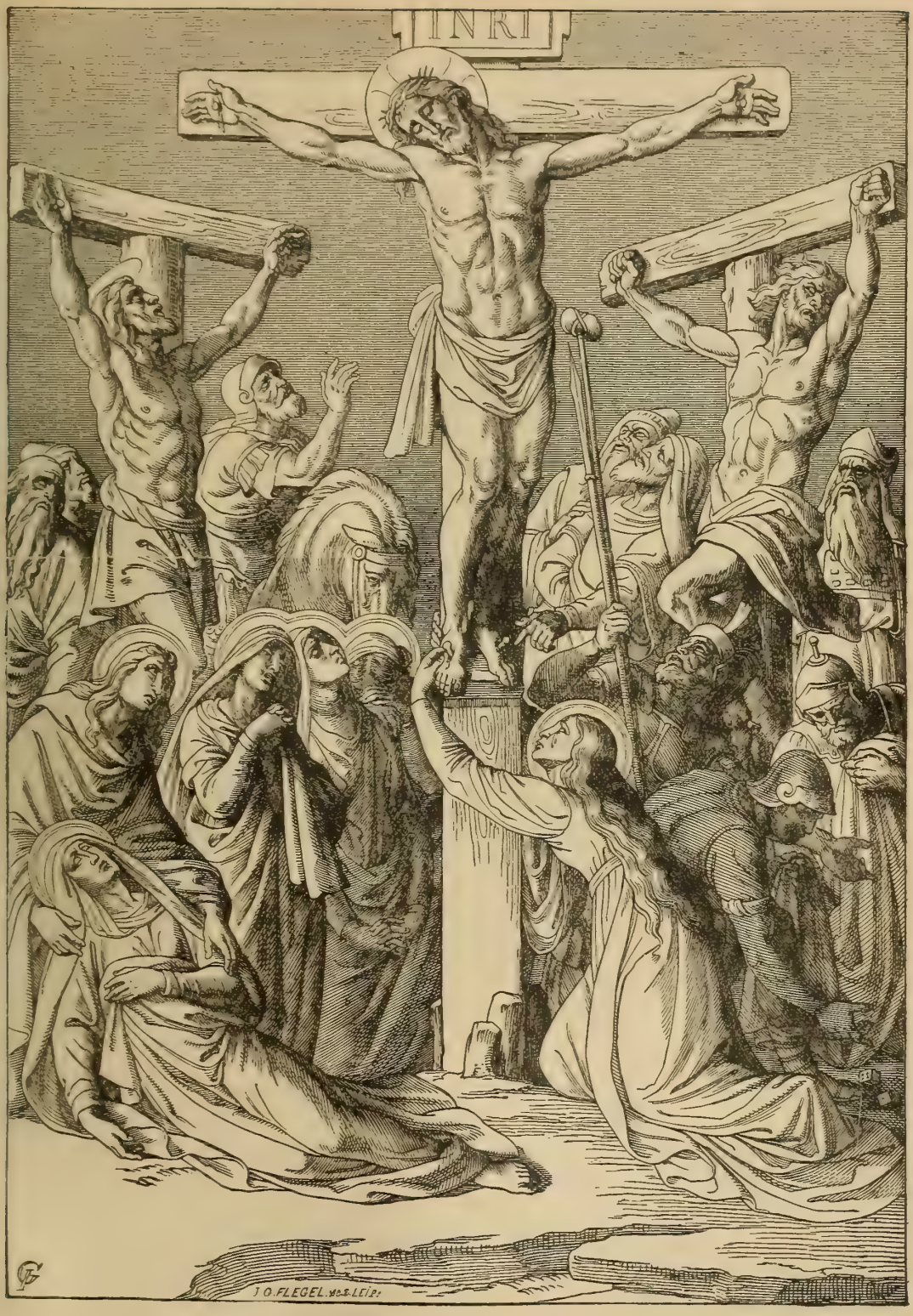
CHRIST SINKING UNDER HIS CROSS ON THE WAY TO GOLGOTHA. 457

be a king. A great crowd remained standing round the foot of the cross, and the chief priests, whose hearts were as hard as iron, continued to mock and revile Jesus. He saved others, they said; himself he cannot save. If he be the Christ, the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

Even the two thieves who were hanging by his side, joined in these scoffings, but Jesus heeded them not. His eye passed over the crowd till it rested upon the faces of his beloved disciple John, and his mother, Mary, who was there with some of the other women that had followed him from Galilee.

As always throughout his life, he thought not of himself but of others; and now that he was leaving those whom he had loved the most, it was well that they should love one another the more tenderly. He said to the disciple, Behold thy mother, and to his mother he said, Behold thy son. And from that hour, that disciple took her to his own home.

SIMON COMPELLED TO HELP JESUS BEAR THE CROSS.



THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. 459

Some time had now gone by, and one of the thieves, who was touched by the patience and the gentleness of Jesus, rebuked his companion for railing at him, and said, We indeed are justly punished, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss. Then, turning towards Jesus, he said, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus answered him, Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

It was now mid-day, but at the sight of Jesus hanging upon the cross, the sun hid his face, and there fell upon the land a darkness which lasted for three hours. The scoffing crowd was hushed and filled with awe; and in silence Jesus endured the agony of those terrible hours in which he suffered for the sins of men, until just at the end of the time he uttered an exceeding bitter cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

"It Is Finished."

But God had not forsaken him. Almost immediately the darkness rolled away from the face of the earth, and the cloud was removed from the soul of Jesus. Father, he said, into thy hands I commend my spirit!

A few moments afterwards, he said, I thirst, and one of the soldiers filled a sponge with the sour wine or vinegar that they were accustomed to drink, and put it to his lips. He just tasted it, and then with a loud cry, It is finished, he gave up the ghost.

Then was the veil of the temple—the gorgeous curtain that separated the holy of holies from the holy place—rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened. And the Roman centurion, and those who were with him, watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and those things that were done, said, Truly this was the Son of God.

And all the people who had come together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts, and returned into the city.

Among the Pharisees, there were two men who had not consented to the death of Jesus. One of these was Joseph of Arimathea, a good man and a just; the other was Nicodemus. They had been unable to prevent the murder, but they could at least give the body an honorable burial; and Joseph went to Pilate, and asked to be allowed to take it down from the cross.

Preparations for Burial.

Pilate gave him leave, and he hurried back with a long piece of fine white linen, which he bought to wrap round the body. The soldiers had meanwhile pierced it with a spear to satisfy themselves that life had left it, thus making a hole in the side, from which there had flowed out blood and water.

Joseph took down the body from the cross, with the help of the women who loved Jesus. They had been standing near it all the time, and now they were anxious to see what would be done. It was the day which we call Friday, and at six o'clock that evening the Jewish Sabbath would begin, on which no one was allowed to do any work, so that there was but little time for the burial.

In accordance with the Jewish custom of anointing the bodies of those whom they desired to honor, Nicodemus had brought a quantity of sweet-smelling spices and ointments; but all that could now be done was to wind the fine linen round the body, cover it with the spices, and lay it for the present in a garden close by, that belonged to Joseph. In the garden there was a new

tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; here they laid the body, and closed up the entrance by rolling a great stone in front of it.

Then the women hurried home, intending to prepare more spices and ointments, and to return very early on the day after the Sabbath, to finish what had been left undone. They worked till sunset, but as soon as the Sabbath had begun, they paused and rested from their labor, according to the commandment.

Never has there been so sad a day as that Passover Sabbath in Jerusalem and Bethany, on the day after the death of Jesus.

It seemed to the disciples that everything had been taken from them at once. They had lost their Master and Teacher, him for whose sake they had given up their homes and their daily work, him whom they loved and honored far above all others. Of all that had passed since that terrible evening, less than two days ago, when he was taken from them, they could not bear to think.

THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

Jesus had indeed told them beforehand that he would be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and would suffer death upon the cross, but they had listened without attention, for they had been unable to believe that he really meant what his words seemed

to imply. Now it had all happened, just as he had said; and besides their friend, they had, as it seemed to them, lost their Messiah. They had learnt to know that the thoughts of Jesus were not as their thoughts, but still they had always looked forward to the day when he would allow them to proclaim him king, and would come forward, as the Redeemer of Israel, to drive out the Romans, and rule in righteousness.

The Tomb Guarded.

All these hopes were now forever ended, and though Jesus had spoken of his rising from the dead on the third day, they had paid but little heed to his words, and hardly dared to take any comfort from them.

The Pharisees, however, had a very clear recollection of what Jesus had said; and they went to Pilate and asked for a band of soldiers to guard the sepulchre, lest the disciples should come by night and steal away the body, and tell the people that he was risen from the dead.

Pilate gave them leave to do as they pleased about it, and they set a seal upon the great stone that closed up the sepulchre, so that nobody could move it without breaking the seal. They also placed a guard of soldiers round the tomb, to prevent anyone from coming near to it.

The Sabbath was over, and the sun was beginning to dawn upon the first day of the week. The women, who had risen very early, while it was yet dark, were on their way to the sepulchre, carrying with them the spices and ointments that they had prepared. They knew nothing of the guard that had been set, but they remembered the great stone at the entrance to the tomb, and as they went, they said one to another, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

But when they had reached the place, they found that the stone had already gone. A great earthquake had shaken the garden, and an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven, and had rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the guard of soldiers did shake, and became as dead men.

The women also were frightened when they saw the angel, but he said unto them, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.

This was indeed a wonderful message, and the hearts of the women beat high with fear and great joy, as they departed quickly from the sepulchre, and ran to take the good news to the disciples.

The Sepulchre is Empty.

But one of them, Mary Magdalene, had been too much overcome with grief at the sight of the empty tomb, to pay any attention to the words of the angel. She had come to seek the body of her Lord, and now it was gone! Sorrowfully she left the place, and finding Peter and John, she said to them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him!

When they heard this, Peter and John were filled with astonishment, and ran both together to the sepulchre, but when they had reached it, they found that it was even as Mary had said. They saw the long piece of fine white linen, and the napkin that had been wrapped about the head, but the body itself was no longer there. Then they remembered how Jesus had spoken of rising

from the dead on the third day, and believed that his words had been fulfilled.

They went away to seek for some of the other disciples, that they might tell them of the wonder that had come to pass, but Mary remained behind at the sepulchre, weeping. Presently she stooped down, and looking again into the tomb, she perceived that there were now two angels in it. One of them was sitting at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her, Woman, why weepest thou? And she answered, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

She did not wait to hear what they would say, but, turning again towards the garden, she saw a man standing there, who asked her the same question, Woman, why weepest thou?

It was Jesus, her risen Lord, but Mary did not know him. Her eyes were blinded with her tears, and taking it for granted that he was a gardener, she cried out, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

THE ANGEL AND WOMEN AT THE EMPTY TOMB.

Jesus desired to comfort her, by convincing her that he was not dead, but alive, and for this one single word was sufficient. He called her by her name, Mary! and in a moment, her sorrow vanished, like a cloud before the sun. She knew his voice, and threw herself on the ground before him in an ecstasy of joy.

Then Jesus told her that she must not think too much of his visible presence, or suppose that he would remain with her always; he was going to ascend to his Father in heaven, and she was to remain on earth to comfort others, as she herself had been comforted. Go to my brethren, he told her, and say unto them that I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

The first to see Jesus after he had risen from the dead was Mary Magdalene; the second person who saw him was Peter, who had denied his Master, and had afterwards wept so bitterly. Jesus also showed himself to the women who had been at the sepulchre; and on the same day, towards evening, he appeared to two of the disciples as they were journeying towards Emmaus.

The Walk to Emmaus.

The village of Emmaus is about seven and a half miles distant from Jerusalem, and as they walked towards it, the two disciples talked together sorrowfully about the death of their Master. Their hearts were not lifted up with joy at the thought that he had risen again, for although they had been told about the empty tomb and the vision of angels, they had not heard as yet that anyone had actually seen the Lord, and could hardly believe that he was alive.

Presently a stranger joined them. He appeared to be going in the same direction, and he began to talk to them, and ask why they were so sad. Then they told him all that was in their hearts, and how they were broken down with sorrow for the loss of their Master, whom they had believed to be the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel.

The stranger listened to them for some time in silence, and then he began to talk to them in a wonderful way. He reminded them of all that had been written about the Messiah in the books of Moses and of the prophets, and how they had long ago foretold that he would suffer and die for the sins of his people, and that then he would be exalted to the right hand of God, and clothed with glory and honor.

By this time they had reached the village of Emmaus. The two disciples did not know who the stranger was, but they felt strangely comforted by his presence, and longed to continue in his company. They pressed him therefore to remain with them, and share their evening meal. Abide with us, they said, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent.

Their Eyes Are Opened.

The stranger yielded to their wishes, and agreed to share their meal. Presently, while they were eating, he took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave to them; and as he did so, their eyes were opened, and they knew that the stranger who had comforted their hearts, was the Lord himself. At the same moment he vanished out of their sight. and they rose up in haste and returned to Jerusalem, that they might tell the other disciples that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead.

When they reached the city, they found the eleven Apostles gathered together, and many others with them. They also had been assured in the meanwhile that their Master was alive, and were repeating over and over again the joyful news. The Lord is risen indeed, they were saying, and hath appeared to Simon Peter.

The disciples were still talking together on the evening of the same day, when suddenly their voices were hushed, for they perceived that Jesus himself was standing in the midst of them.

The doors of the room had been locked,

for fear of the Jews, but Jesus had not entered by the door. The disciples did not know how he had come; all they knew was that he was there, once more, in the midst of them.

Jesus said, Peace be unto you, and then he showed them his hands, which had been pierced by the nails, and the hole in his side which had been made by the spear of the soldier.

Then he breathed upon them, and spoke some solemn words—words similar to those that he had once before spoken to Peter when he had blessed him, and said that he gave unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Now he said unto them all, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

It was a great privilege and a great responsibility, and though they did not understand as yet all that it meant, they listened in silence with bowed heads. When they again raised them, Jesus had disappeared, and they were left alone again as before.

What Thomas Said.

But now they had seen the Lord for themselves, and their joy was still more full. All the apostles had seen him but two—Judas, the traitor, who before this had hanged himself, and Thomas, who had not been present with the rest when Jesus came.

When they again saw Thomas, the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord. But he would not believe them. He thought they were mistaken, and he said, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

So it went on for eight days, and on the eighth day, the disciples were again assembled, and Thomas with them. As before, the doors were shut, and as before, Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you.

Then he looked towards Thomas, for he knew that Thomas doubted what he had heard from the rest, and he said to him, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.

In a moment the doubts of Thomas vanished, and, falling at the feet of Jesus, he worshipped him, saying, My Lord and my God!

Jesus answered him, Thomas, because thou has seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

No Shepherd for the Sheep.

The disciples did not remain long in Jerusalem after these things, but returned to Galilee, until they should receive some sign from their Master as to their future course.

They were now as sheep without a shepherd, for though they knew that Jesus was alive and had visions of his presence from time to time, still he was no longer with them constantly as before, leading them day by day.

For the last three years they had left their homes, and had followed him about from place to place; now they were uncertain as to how they were to spend the rest of their lives, and meanwhile they returned to their homes, and to the daily duties in which they had been engaged when Jesus first called them.

It was on a fair calm evening, that Simon Peter went down to the shore from his house at Capernaum, and asked some of his friends if they would go out with him, fishing. Six

JESUS CONVINCING THOMAS OF HIS RESURRECTION.

others all of them disciples of the Lord Jesus, agreed to do so; and soon the boat was launched, and the net let down into the sea. All that night they remained out upon the lake, but although this was usually the best time for fishing, on that night they caught nothing.

The Net Full of Fishes.

When the morning began to dawn, they saw a man, who appeared to them a stranger, standing upon the shore. He called out to them, Children, have ye anything to eat? And they answered, No. Then he said, Cast the net upon the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.

They did not know who the stranger was, but they did as he said, and no sooner was the net let down, than it began to sink with the weight of the fishes that came crowding into it.

Then John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, called to mind the day when once before Jesus had come to them after a night of fruitless toil, and had called the fish to their net. He said to Peter, It is the Lord; and with his usual eagerness, Peter threw himself into the water, without waiting for the rest, and swam ashore to cast himself at the feet of Jesus.

The other disciples followed in the ship as quickly as they could, dragging after them the heavenly laden net; and when they had reached the shore, they drew it up on to the beach, and sat down to count the fish. On the former day, more than two years ago, when Jesus had filled their net, it had broken by reason of the great strain upon it, but now it remained firm, although it was full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three.

On the beach they found a fire of coals ready prepared, and fish laid upon it, and bread. Jesus said to them, Bring now of the fish that ye have caught, and when the food was ready, he said, Come and eat.

It was a solemn meal that they ate together that morning in the early twilight. None of the disciples dared to ask the stranger, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord, but in silence they watched him, as he broke the bread, and distributed the fish also among them.

When the meal was ended, Jesus turned towards Simon Peter, and said to him, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?

He meant to remind him of the time when, after just such a meal, in the darkness, not of the morning but of the evening, Peter had said, Though all should be offended because of thee, yet will not I, and had been warned that before cock-crow, he would deny his Master thrice.

Peter was more humble now. He had fallen, and had learnt his weakness, and he said nothing about loving more than others. But though he had sinned, he knew that he had been forgiven, and he answered, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

The Charge to Peter.

Jesus said to him, Feed my lambs. He, the Good Shepherd, was going to leave his flock on earth, and he desired that Peter should carry on his work.

Again, a second time, he asked the solemn question, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? And again Peter answered, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep.

Still once more, he asked, for the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? And Peter, who was grieved that he should think it necessary to ask the question three times, answered, Yea, Lord, thou knowest

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

Jesus said to him, as before, Feed my sheep; and then he went on to tell him that if indeed he loved him and was prepared to carry on his work, he must give up his own will, and obey the will of God in all things, even though it should lead him at last to a cruel death. This had been the rule of the life of Jesus himself, and he ended by saying to Peter, Follow me.

Three years ago, Peter had heard those same words on the same seashore, and he had risen up, and left all to obey the summons. Now again his whole heart answered to the call of the Master, and all through the rest of his life, he strove to follow in his footsteps, until at last he also was called upon to suffer the bitter death of the cross.

Again at Bethany.

It was now some weeks since the day when Jesus had risen from the dead, and the disciples had once more left Galilee and returned to Jerusalem, for their Master had told them that he would meet them there.

At the time appointed he came, and he led them out from the city as far as to Bethany, the village on the Mount of Olives that he loved so well, the home of his friends, Martha and Mary and Lazarus.

As they went, he told them that the time had come when he must be parted from them, and they would see him no more, but that though he would no longer be with them in bodily presence, he would always be near them in spirit. He said, too, that he did not wish them to return to their homes or their fishing-boats, but rather to devote the rest of their lives to the work that he himself had begun, and to go about teaching the good news of the kingdom of God, healing the sick, and casting out devils.

He told them also, that he would prepare them for this great work by pouring out upon them his Spirit of truth and holiness, and that after he had left them they were to return to Jerusalem, and wait for this Spirit to descend into their hearts. When they had received it, they were to begin and teach, first in Jerusalem, and then in all other countries. Go ye and teach all nations, he said, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Carried into Heaven.

When Jesus had ended these sayings, he lifted up his hands over his disciples, and blessed them. And it came to pass, that while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

The disciples knew that he would never again appear to them in bodily form, either at the breaking of bread, or by the seashore, or as they talked by the way; and yet they were filled, not with sorrow, but with great joy.

Their Lord had conquered death, and had gone before them into the unseen world, with the promise on his lips that he would always be with them, and would send his Spirit to guide and comfort them. Henceforward they feared neither life nor death; and when they had lifted up their prayers and praises to their ascended Lord, they returned to Jerusalem to wait for the promised Spirit, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CASTING LOTS FOR ANOTHER APOSTLE—CHOICE OF MATTHIAS—WONDERS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST—THE TONGUES OF FIRE—PETER'S REMARKABLE SERMON—THOUSANDS OF BELIEVERS—THE LAME MAN HEALED—TWO APOSTLES IN PRISON—STORY OF ANNANIAS AND SAPPHIRA—PRISON DOORS THROWN OPEN—CHOOSING SEVEN DEACONS—STORY OF STEPHEN—THE FIRST MARTYR—SIMON THE SORCERER—PHILIP IN AFRICA—A MAN IN A CHARIOT—A QUEEN'S TREASURER BAPTIZED.

VERY soon after Christ left his disciples they began the great work which he appointed for them to do. We know what they did, for a history of it has been written, called the Acts of the Apostles. It was Luke who wrote that history—the same Luke who wrote the history of Jesus called the Gospel of Luke. Luke was not one of the twelve apostles, but he knew a great deal about Jesus and his twelve apostles, and the Holy Spirit taught him what to write.

You know there were eleven apostles who saw Jesus caught up to heaven. Two angels stood near and comforted them by saying, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

This sweet promise made them very joyful. It was on Mount Olivet they were standing when Jesus was taken up out of their sight. They had only a mile to go to Jerusalem. They went there and stayed there.

Why did they stay there? There were many in Jerusalem who hated them, and who wished to kill them. The priests and Pharisees were there who killed Jesus. Why, then, did the apostles remain in that city? Because Jesus had bid them wait in Jerusalem till he should send down the Holy Ghost.

They used often to meet together in a large room up stairs, and they used to pray very earnestly for the Holy Ghost. There were many more than the eleven apostles who met together. Mary, the mother of Jesus, came there, and other women who loved Jesus, and who once went to his tomb. And there were the brethren of Jesus, and many other holy men, who met in this room. Altogether there were one hundred and twenty people.

Choosing Another Apostle.

One day Peter stood up among the believers in this room and made a short speech. What was it about? It was about choosing another apostle in the place of Judas, so as to make up the number of the twelve again. Peter had read in the Psalms, Let another take his office. He knew that verse was about Judas. It was the office of Judas to be an apostle, and God said that another man should be an apostle instead, and so take his office.

You know, said Peter, that a field was bought with the money that Judas got for selling his Lord; and you know that in this field he fell down, and that his body burst in the midst, so that the field is called "the field of blood." God has said, Let another

take his office. Let us now fix on a man to be in the place of Judas. Peter knew it must be a man who had known Jesus well when he was on earth, and could tell people about his rising from the grave.

There were two men in the room who had known Jesus a long while. Their names were Joseph Justus and Matthias. Peter thought either of them fit to be an apostle, and he did not know which to choose. So Peter and the rest of the apostles prayed to God to let them know which he had chosen.

How did they expect God to answer their prayer? Did God speak? Did an angel come? No. The apostles cast lots.

How Lots Were Cast.

There were many ways of casting lots. Perhaps the apostles cast lots in this way: perhaps they wrote the name of Joseph Justus on one little piece of wood called a tablet, and the name of Matthias on another, and then shook these two tablets in the end of a robe till one tablet fell out. The tablet that fell out had the name of Matthais written on it. It was a great honor to be one of the twelve apostles. Yet we never hear again of Matthias.

Ten days had now passed away since Jesus had gone up to heaven. How long did Jesus spend on earth after he had risen? Forty days. Ten more days make fifty days.

It was now fifty days since Jesus rose. There was a feast of the Jews at that time, called the feast of first-fruits, when the Jews brought their first sheaves of wheat to present to the Lord. Thousands of Jews came up from all countries to keep this feast. One name for the feast was Pentecost.

It was now just fifty days after the Passover. It was the first day of the week. On that day the believers in Jesus met together in the large room to pray.

It was early in the morning—about eight o'clock. Suddenly a great sound was heard. It was like the sound of a very strong, high wind. This great sound filled the place where the believers were sitting, and shook the whole house. There came also what looked like fire—divided into many parts, each part appearing to be a tongue of fire; and these came and sat on each of the believers—on the women as well as on the men.

Spoke in all Sorts of Languages.

At the same time they all were able to speak many strange languages which they had never learned. Jesus had once told his apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, and they may have wondered how they should be able to teach strange nations; but now they were made able to speak to every one in his own language.

The great noise which had shaken the house had been heard in all Jerusalem, and people came running towards the place. They could not all get into the house, but the people in the house could come out to the people in the street. There were Jews who lived in other countries, as well as Gentiles, and they heard the believers speaking in the languages they spoke in the countries where they were born. They were very much astonished, and said, How do these men of Galilee speak all these languages? Some thought this was a miracle, and said to each other, What is the meaning of it? But others only mocked, and said, These men have been drinking wine.

Then Peter stood up, and all the other apostles stood near him. He spoke in a very loud voice, that all the multitude might hear.

He began by saying, These men are not drunken, as you suppose; for men do not get

TONGUES OF FIRE RESTING ON THE DISCIPLES.

drunk so early in the morning. But, said he, God has sent down his Holy Spirit, as he promised. Hear my words, cried out Peter; Jesus of Nazareth, who did so many miracles among you, as you know, has been crucified by your wicked hands. But he has been raised from the dead and taken to God's right hand, and now he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

Perhaps the multitude could see still the brightness of the Spirit. Many now believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and felt very unhappy for having crucified him; and they were pricked in their hearts, and came to the apostles, saying very sorrowfully, What shall we do?

Thousands are Baptized.

Then Peter answered, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost. Three thousand were baptized that day!

Then was fulfilled what John the Baptist once said: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

The three thousand people who believed lived very happily. They went often to see each other, and they all loved one another, and they prayed together.

Some were very poor and some were very rich. Those who were rich sold their fine houses and gardens, and with the money they helped the poor people.

The Apostles did a great many miracles. Let us hear the account of one of these miracles.

Peter and John went up to the temple one afternoon, about three o'clock, when the lamb was sacrificed on the altar. As they passed through a fine brass gate called Beautiful, they saw a poor beggar lying there. He was lame. He had been born with weak bones in his ankles and feet, so that he could never walk. He was now forty years old, and he had no hope of ever being cured. Every day his friends carried him to this gate, that he might beg money of the people passing through. In the evening his friends carried him home.

Peter Lifted Him Up.

When he saw Peter and John coming through, he begged them to give him something. Peter and John stopped, and said to the beggar, Fix your eyes on us. So the man looked, in great hopes of a little money. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk. Then Peter took the beggar by his right hand and helped him to get up. But the man sprang from the ground with a leap, though before he could not stand; his feet and ankle-bones had been made strong in a single moment.

The man followed Peter and John into the temple, leaping as he went, and praising God. There were a great many people in the courts of the temple who had come up to pray, and they saw the man leaping, and they knew him well as the beggar who had sat at the gate year after year.

The man was so fond of Peter and John, that he held them fast, lest they should go away. People in the streets heard what had happened, and came in crowds to see the man. They looked at Peter and John, admiring them, and thinking they were very great men to do such a wonder.

But Peter and John did not want to be admired. They wanted everybody to praise the Saviour. So Peter stood up to preach in the temple courts. He said, Ye men of

PETER HEALING THE LAME MAN AT THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE.

Israel, why do you look on us as though by our own power and goodness we had made this man walk? It is through believing on Jesus he was cured. You asked Pontius Pilate to have Jesus killed, and to let go the murderer Barabbas. But God raised him from the dead, and took him up to heaven, where he will stay till the happy time that God has spoken of. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

Peter and John Put in Prison.

Peter had just preached his second sermon written in the Bible. He had preached it in the temple. His first sermon was preached in the street; this, in the temple. There were more enemies here in the temple than there had been in the street, for the priests were here who hated Jesus, and could not bear to hear that he was still alive, having risen from the grave. A whole troop of them came, seized Peter and John, and put them in a prison close by. They could not judge them that evening, for it was getting dark.

What a dreadful thing to spend a night in prison, a close, unpleasant, dark dungeon! This was the first night that the Apostles were imprisoned, but it was not the last.

The judges were called the Sanhedrim. There were about seventy of them. Their hall of judgment was close to the temple. Early in the morning Peter and John were taken out of prison and made to stand before the judges. These judges sat in a half-circle round the wall. Among them was Christ's great enemy—Caiaphas, the high priest.

But Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were not there, though they belonged to the Sanhedrim. Many of the relatives of Caiaphas came to see the judgment.

But who is that man standing by Peter and John, looking so loving and so brave? He is a very poor man, yet joy is in his looks. It is the poor cripple who sat by the gate yesterday begging.

The Wonderful Name.

Looking towards this man, the judges said to Peter and John, By what name, or by what power, have you done this? That is to say, How have you cured that lame man?

Then Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, and answered boldly: By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you quite well.

Then he added these words: There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. It is not only that this poor cripple is saved from his lameness by Jesus, but that precious name can save us all from sin and death, and no other name can do it.

The judges were surprised to hear Peter speak so boldly for his Master.

But though the judges saw that a great miracle had been done, they were determined not to believe in Jesus themselves and to prevent other people believing. This was the sin against the Holy Ghost. When you yourself believe, and yet try to prevent others believing, that is the sin against the Holy Ghost; as when the Pharisees saw the miracles of Jesus, and said he did them through Satan, to prevent others believing on him. This is the sin that cannot be forgiven. The priests did just the same now. They forbade Peter and John to teach any more.

The judges would have liked to punish Peter and John; but as the people saw the very man who had been cured standing before their eyes, the judges were afraid to

punish the apostles. All they could do was to command them not to teach or to preach in the name of Jesus any more.

But Peter and John boldly answered, Is it right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God?

God had told them to speak, and they said they would speak. How gladly now would the judges have killed them! But they were afraid of making the people angry, and so they let them go.

Peter and John hastened home to their own friends and told them all that happened to them during the night and in the morning. And then they prayed together, and thanked God for doing wonders in the name of Jesus.

As soon as they had done praying, the house was shaken by the Holy Ghost entering in once more and helping them to speak boldly about Jesus.

What a Rich Man Did.

There were now a great many people who believed in Jesus. Three thousand had turned to him after Peter's first sermon on the morning of Pentecost, and five thousand more had turned after Peter's second sermon in the temple one evening. Three thousand and five thousand made eight thousand. They lived very happily, sharing their things with one another. The rich sold their lands and gave the money to the poor.

One rich man, named Barnabas, sold his land and brought the money to the apostles and laid it at their feet, to do what they would with it. You will often hear again of this good Barnabas.

But were all the believers good? No; there were some who did not believe with their hearts. They wished to go to heaven, but they did not love Jesus: they tried to seem good and to get praised.

There was a rich man, named Ananias, who wanted to be praised. He had a wife named Sapphira. They thought they would like to seem as good as Barnabas, but they did not like to part with all their money. One said to the other, Let us sell our land and give the price to the apostles—but not quite all. Oh, then we shall not seem so good as Barnabas. Cannot we pretend to give it all? The apostles will never know what money we got for the land, and we will let them think we have given them the whole for the poor.

So Ananais took part of the money and carried it to the apostles and laid it at their feet, and hoped they would think he had given all.

Did the apostles know? You will see by what Peter said: Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? You need not have sold the land at all; and when you have sold it, you need not have brought us the money. Why have you thought in your heart of doing this?

A Sudden Death.

As soon as Ananias heard Peter's words he fell down dead. Some young men took up his body, wrapped round it linen cloths, and took it out and buried it. Every one who heard of this sudden death was filled with fear.

But Sapphira did not hear of it, so she was not frightened. About three hours after her husband's death she came in, perhaps expecting to be thanked and praised. Then Peter tried her, to see whether she joined in the lie. He said, How much did you sell the land for? She said they had sold it for the sum that Ananais had brought to the apostles, though they had really sold it for more.

Peter replied, Why did you agree together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband shall carry thee out.

Immediately Sapphira fell down dead, and the young men who just returned from burying her husband buried her also. The people who had been frightened at hearing of Ananais' death were still more frightened now.

After the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira, people honored the apostles more than ever. They brought numbers of their sick friends to be cured. They placed them in the streets on their beds, that if Peter should pass by, his shadow falling on them might heal them. People came from all the cities round about Jerusalem, and the sick were healed and the devils cast out. What did these miracles show? They showed that what the apostles said of Peter's Master was all true, and that he was really the Son of God.

The Prison Doors Unlocked.

The high priest and his friends could not bear to hear the apostles praised, and they sent men to seize them and take them to prison. This prison was the place where thieves and murderers were shut up. What a place for holy men to spend the night!

We do not know how many of the apostles were shut up this time. But they did not spend the whole night there, for an angel came in the darkness, and by his great strength unlocked the prison-doors, and yet so quietly that the soldiers, watching all around, never heard him come. The soldiers did not even see the apostles go out; therefore it seems certain that God had made them all sleep soundly that night, though they ought to have been awake.

The angel, after leading the apostles out, said, in parting, Go speak in the temple all the words of this life.

So, as soon as it was light, they went to the temple, and began to preach as usual. Perhaps they may have had time to go home first to refresh their weary bodies and to see their weeping friends.

But the high priest knew nothing about what had happend that night, neither did the other judges.

Could Not Find the Prisoners.

Early in the morning they all met together in the great council called the Sanhedrim. A great many judges were in the hall that day. They were very anxious to see the apostles, and they sent men to the prison to fetch them. But the men came back, saying, We cannot find the prisoners. We found the prison all locked up, and the keepers standing before the gates, but when we opened the doors we could not find any one.

The judges were very much astonished to hear this, and they could not think what had become of the apostles, till a man came in and said, Behold, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple, teaching the people. Here was another surprise. The priests had never thought that the apostles would go on teaching after having been put in prison. Of course, they felt very angry; but the soldiers who fetched them were obliged to bring the apostles gently, or the people might have stoned the soldiers.

When they were brought, and standing before their judges, the high priest asked them, Did not we command you not to teach in this name? And behold, you have taught all the people in Jerusalem; and you want to make us guilty of killing this man!

He did not like to mention the name of Jesus, so he called him "this man."

Peter and the other apostles answered, We

ought to obey God rather than men. God hath raised up Jesus, whom you killed and hanged upon a tree. The judges grew more angry than ever, and wanted to kill the apostles. But there was a wise man among them, named Gamaliel, who sent the apostles out for a little while; then he advised the other judges not to punish the apostles, lest they should really be God's people. So the rest agreed to let them go, after they had beaten them first. But the apostles did not mind the beating, and went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

There were now thousands and thousands of believers in Jesus. Among them were many poor widows. The apostles had a great deal of money that rich people had given them for the poor. They spent some of this money in buying food for the poor widows, and they gave them a portion every day.

Seven Men Chosen.

This was a great deal of trouble, and took up a great deal of time. Yet the apostles could not satisfy all the widows. Some of these widows belonged to Jerusalem, and spoke Hebrew; others came from distant lands, and these widows spoke Greek. It was these Greek-speaking widows who grew discontented. Some of their friends took their part, and said they had not their right share of food daily.

When the apostles heard what was said, they called the brethren together to propose a plan to them.

They said, We cannot look after giving food to all these widows, because we must continually pray and preach the Gospel. So you had better choose seven good men to give out the food.

The multitude of believers liked the plan, and chose seven men who were known to be very good. The chief of the seven was named Stephen. He was indeed a holy and a wise man, and you will hear much about him. There was another named Philip. You will hear something more of him, but of the rest we are not told anything more.

All these seven men were to be called deacons, or servants, for they were to help the apostles to serve. There was an apostle named Philip, and now there was a deacon Philip also. The apostles prayed over these seven deacons, and laid their hands on them to give them the power of doing miracles.

Stephen Before the Judges.

Soon afterwards a great many of the priests believed on Jesus. To persuade the priests to believe was a wonder indeed, such as Christ had promised his apostles they should do through faith in his name, after he had gone up on high.

Stephen was the most remarkable of all the seven deacons. He was full of faith, and did great wonders among the people.

But the enemies of Jesus hated him the more for being so wonderful. Learned Jews went to him and disputed with him, but they found that Stephen was wiser than they were.

So they determined to bring him before the great council, called the Sanhedrim, and to bribe men to tell lies of him. And they went about among the people, and tried to set the people against him by saying false things of him.

One day they came suddenly upon him and caught him, and brought him to the great hall of the Sanhedrim, close to the temple, and set him before the judges.

False witnesses came in and said that Stephen had declared that Jesus of Nazareth

would destroy the temple. Stephen had never said this, for it would be the Romans who would destroy the temple.

After Stephen had been so falsely accused, the judges, who sat round, looked at him, and were surprised to see his face like the face of an angel, so bright, so glorious, so holy. But this sight did not turn the hearts of the wicked judges. They went on judging him.

The high priest was the chief among them. (It was not Caiaphas now who was high priest. He had been put out of his place.)

This high priest, after hearing the wicked men accuse him, said to Stephen, Are these things so?

Then Stephen began to defend himself against what the false witnesses had said of him. He made a very long speech; at last he told his judges that all of them had been murderers of the Son of God.

An Angry Mob.

This made the judges very angry. Stephen's words cut them to the heart, but did not make them repent. They gnashed upon him with their teeth. They were like devils; he was like an angel.

He lifted up his eyes towards heaven, and saw there the glory of God and Jesus standing on his right hand.

Then he cried out, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear Stephen's blessed words, and they ran upon him all together, as the men of Nazareth had once hunted Jesus. They ran beside the temple courts, along the street that led to a gate of the city, near the brook Kidron; and when they had got Stephen out, they took up great stones and threw them at him.

In order to hurl the stones with more force, they took off their outer garments, and asked a young man named Saul to take care of them. He was an unbelieving young man, who was glad to see Stephen killed.

Stephen went on praying all the time the stones were falling, calling out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. At last, when bruised all over and ready to die, he kneeled down and said, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Thus with his last breath he asked God to forgive his cruel murderers.

Death of the First Martyr.

As soon as he had offered this prayer he fell asleep.

This was the death of the first martyr. Thousands and thousands of martyrs have died like him, praising God and praying for their enemies, and they will all come with Jesus to reign with him in glory.

The dead body of Stephen was not left to be cast out by his enemies. It was buried by holy men, and with tears and sighs.

The Jews went on ill-treating the believers at Jerusalem; so that many of them went to other cities to get out of the reach of their enemies. Saul, that young man, who kept the clothes of the stoners, was the fiercest of all. He went into any house he pleased, and dragged the believers to prison—both men and women.

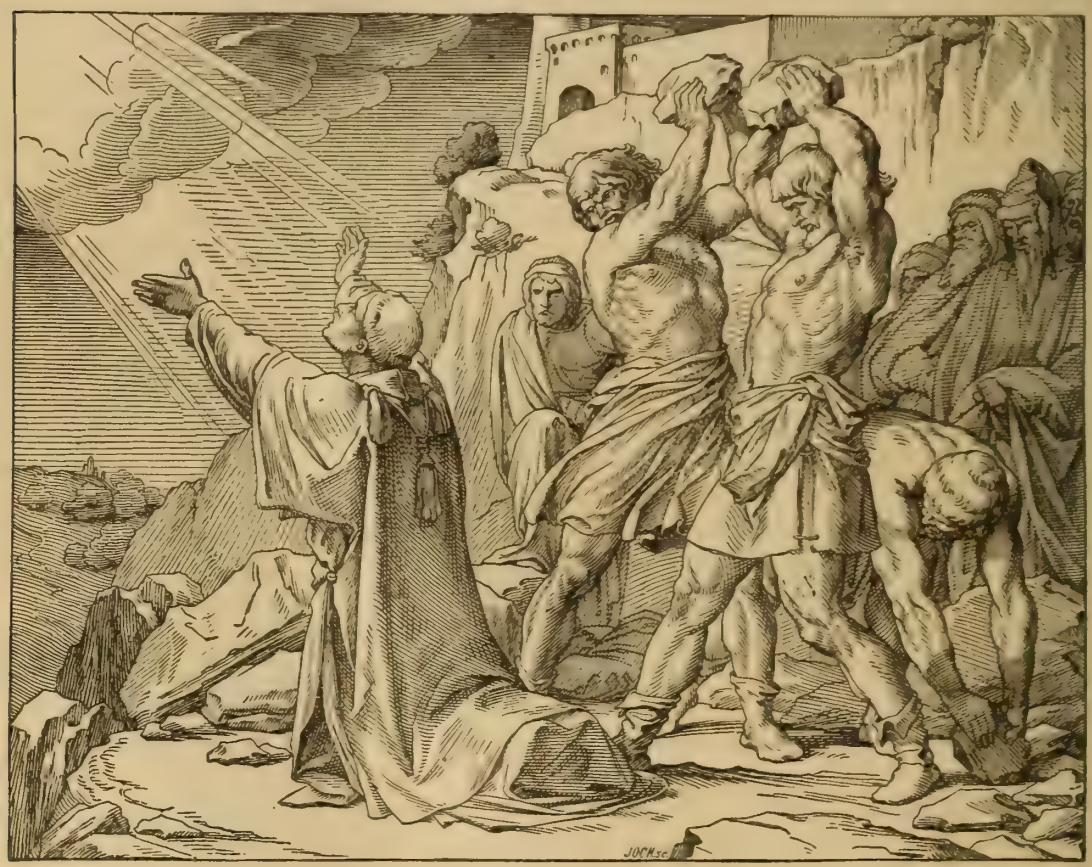
But the apostles would not leave Jerusalem. They went on preaching pardon to the murderers of Jesus, if they would repent.

One of the deacons was named Philip. He went down to Samaria to preach. He did not go to Sychar, in Samaria, where Jesus had once preached to the woman at the well. He went to the finest city in Samaria. Its name was the same as the

name of the country—Samaria. It was built on a beautiful hill, that rises up in the midst of a sweet and fruitful valley. This city was a very wicked place. There were idol temples in it, and there were men who worshipped Satan himself.

Here Philip preached about Jesus; and he also did many great miracles, for the people, they believed what he told them about Jesus, and there was great joy in all the city. Why? Because they knew Christ and his salvation.

Among the men who believed there was one more wicked than the rest. His name was Simon. He had been a great deceiver and had made people believe he was very



STEPHEN STONED TO DEATH BY HIS ENEMIES.

apostles had once laid their hands on him, and given this power to him, as well as to Stephen. Many unclean spirits and devils came out of poor creatures when Philip commanded them. Helpless creatures with the palsy rose up and walked at Philip's word, and lame people leaped like stags.

When men saw what wonders Philip could great, so that everybody said, This man is the great power of God. Little children said so, and old men said so, too: rich and poor—all admired and praised Simon. He was called a sorcerer. What is that? A man who trusts in Satan, and pretends to get help from him; a man who tells lies, and plays all kinds of deceitful tricks.

But now this wicked Simon believed what Philip said, and he asked to be baptized. People no longer thought him wonderful.

Every one listened to Philip, and wondered at his miracles. Philip thought that Simon was turned from his wickedness, and that he believed in Jesus with his heart. So he baptized him. But Simon's heart was not changed.

Good News from Samaria.

Though he believed that Jesus was the Son of God, he did not love him. He stood by Philip, wondering at his miracles and wishing that he himself could do more wonderful things than he had ever done when he was a great sorcerer. He did not repent of his past wickedness, nor pray to Christ for pardon.

The apostles, you remember, remained at Jerusalem. They were not afraid of the cruel hatred of the Jews. They heard the good news that the city of Samaria was full of believers. They thought that they could do them good by going to see them.

So the apostles sent Peter and John down to Samaria. These two apostles were such friends that they generally went together. When they came to Samaria, they found a great many men and women who had turned to God, and who had been baptized by Philip. But they found none who knew about the Holy Ghost and were filled with his power.

So Peter and John laid their hands on the heads of the believers, and prayed that God would give them the Holy Ghost.

Philip had not laid his hands on the believers, for he was not an apostle; he was only a deacon, and he could not bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost on other people. None but the apostles could do this.

When Simon saw what the apostles did to the believers, he thought he would like to be able to do the same, that he might be admired, as he used to be, and that he might get rich. So he took some money, and offered it to Peter and John, and said, Do give me this power, that when I lay my hands on any one he may receive the Holy Ghost.

He Cared for Nothing but Money.

The apostles were much displeased at Simon for thinking they would take money for the gift of God. They were grieved at his having such a wicked thought in his heart. Peter said to him, Thy money perish as well as thou, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be bought with money. Thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent of thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. I see that thou are in chains of sin.

Simon seemed frightened by Peter's answer, for he said, Pray to the Lord for me, that nothing you have said may come to me. You see he did not ask to be forgiven, but only not to be punished. This was a sign that his heart was not right.

He had never really turned to God. He still wanted to get money, and to be praised by men for his power. He was like the two liars—Ananias and Sapphira—a hypocrite. He was like Judas—of the devil; and he had the curse of God upon him. His money was to perish, and he was to perish.

The apostles Peter and John soon left Samaria and returned to Jerusalem. They preached in many villages by the way. Perhaps they went to Sychar once more, and saw that woman who once stood by the well with Jesus.

Philip also did not remain in Samaria, but he did not return to Jerusalem. God had a great work for Philip to do. He was to bring the Gospel into Africa. There were

then three parts of the world: Asia, where Jesus had preached; Europe, where the Gopel had not yet been preached; and Africa, where black people lived. To Africa God determined to send the Gospel.

The angel told Philip to go down to the Philistines' country, at the lower corner of Canaan. Gaza was in that part, but Philip did not go near the town; he went to a desert place near it, on the way to Africa.

It must have seemed strange to Philip to hear he must go to a desert. He might wonder whom he could preach to in a desert. But he went. While he was walking among the rocky hills he saw a very fine carriage going along. It was coming from Jerusalem. There were horses and servants. A great lord was sitting in the carriage reading. This great lord was the chief servant of a great queen called Candace. She was the queen of a hot country in Africa called Ethiopia, where the people are almost black.

This lord had charge of all the queen's treasure, and he was called her treasurer. But we do not know his name.

The Choicest Treasure.

The Spirit said to Philip, Go near to that chariot; and Philip went. He heard the treasurer reading out loud. He had a book, in the form of a scroll, in his hand. On that scroll, or roll, were written the words of the prophet Isaiah. Who would have thought that a lord from a heathen country would read the Word of God?

But this man had been up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. He had not been allowed to go farther than the outer court of the Gentiles, but his prayers in that court were heard, as much as the prayers of the priests in the Holy Place. He had brought back a greater treasure than all his gold and silver, even the words that God once spoke to Isaiah. Philip had the courage to speak to this great lord. He said to him, Do you understand what you are reading?

If the treasurer had been a proud man he would have been affronted by that question from a poor stranger; but he was humble, and he answered, How can I understand if I have no one to teach me? And then he asked Philip to come and sit by him in his chariot. When Philip was sitting in the chariot, the rich man showed him what he was reading. It was that sweet verse in the fifty-third chapter: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

The Stranger is Baptized.

The treasurer, after having read this verse, said to Philip, I do not know the meaning of this. Does the prophet speak of himself, or of some other man?

Then Philip explained it all to him. He told him that Jesus was the lamb, and that he had lately been crucified in Jerusalem; and that he had been so meek to his enemies as a sheep who makes no noise when he is sheared. And he told him that Jesus had risen from his grave, and that he had told his disciples to go and teach people of all countries, and to baptize them in his name.

The treasurer listened very attentively, and wanted to know whether he might be baptized. Just at this moment the chariot passed by a stream. There are not many streams in the desert, and the treasurer was pleased to see water. He cried out, Here is water; may I not be baptized?

Philip said, You may, if you believe with all your heart.

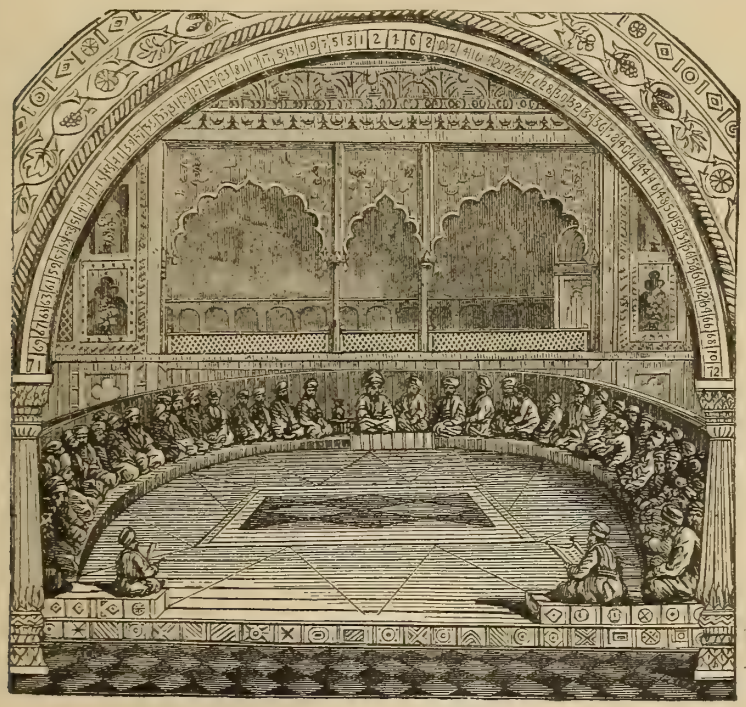
The treasurer replied, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

When Philip saw that he believed, he

desired the driver to stop the horses; and Philip and the treasurer both got out and went together into the water. There Philip baptized this Gentile stranger.

As soon as they were come up out of the water the Spirit caught up Philip, and took him to a place by the seaside. The town where the Spirit left him was once called Ashdod. It was a place where they worshipped idols, Philip went along by the seaside, from place to place, preaching everywhere. At last he stopped at a fine city called Cæsarea, built by the Roman emperor, Cæsar, and named for him.

The treasurer must have been sorry to lose his teacher; yet he was so happy in his Saviour that he went to his home full of joy, ready to teach the Queen Candace and all her people. So the Gospel came into Africa, where many people turned to Jesus.



THE SANHEDRIM IN SESSION.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE STORY OF SAUL—THE BRIGHT LIGHT FROM HEAVEN—A PERSECUTOR CHANGED TO AN APOSTLE—STORY OF BARNABAS—JEWS ATTEMPT TO KILL SAUL—STORY OF PETER AND DORCAS—PETER ON THE HOUSETOP—A REMARKABLE VISION—SIMON THE TANNER AND CORNELIUS—MARTYRDOM OF JAMES—PETER'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON—HEROD'S SPEECH—A BEAUTIFUL CITY—A NOTORIOUS WIZZARD—THE APOSTLES SUFFER PERSECUTION—PAUL STONED BY A MOB—SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL.

A VERY wonderful event is now to be related. You remember there was a young man named Saul, who treated cruelly the disciples of Jesus. He took care of the clothes of those who stoned the holy Stephen. This young man thought he did right in ill-treating believers in Christ, for he thought Christ was a deceiver, and not really the Son of God. After he had done much harm in Jerusalem, he went to other cities to hurt the believers who lived in them.

There was a great city, called Damascus, more than a hundred miles from Jerusalem. He wished to go there. First, he got letters from the high priest at Jerusalem, giving him leave to seize the believers in Damascus, and to bring them in chains to Jerusalem. He meant to show these letters to the chief Jews in Damascus. But on the way such an event happened!

Saul was travelling with several men as his guard. They all arrived in sight of Damascus about noonday, when the sun is the brightest. Suddenly there appeared a light from heaven, brighter than the sun. This light was so dazzling that all the travellers fell down with their faces to the ground, quite unable to look up.

While thus lying prostrate, Saul heard a voice from heaven, saying, Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? Saul answered, Who art thou, Lord? The voice replied, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

Saul's Great Question.

Saul, still trembling and astonished, inquired, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? The voice replied, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

All this time the other men did not speak a word, but they could not hear what Jesus said to Saul, only they heard a sound. After being struck to the ground they got up, and stood by Saul, but Saul himself did not get up till Jesus said, Rise, and stand upon thy feet. Then Saul arose, and opened his eyes, but behold! he could not see! the dazzling light had blinded him! The men were not blinded, and they led Saul by the hand into the city. They took him to a lodging in Straight street, at the nouse of a man named Judas. There Saul sat down, quite blind, and he refused to eat or drink for three days.

As he sat in darkness he was thinking of his sins against Jesus, and of his cruelty to his people. He felt so grieved at all he had done, that he could not eat. He thought of the poor creatures he had sent to prison, of

SAUL STRUCK TO THE EARTH ON HIS WAY TO DAMASCUS.

those he had beaten, and of Stephen, who had been stoned before his eyes. Oh, how could I be so wicked? I am the chief of sinners.

While Saul was in this sad state of blindness and misery, God sent him a dream. It was a comforting dream. Saul saw a man in his dream whose name was Ananias. He came into the room, and put his hands on Saul, and said, Receive thy sight. Till this dream came, how could Saul know that he should ever see again? He knew that he well deserved to be always blind. But he kept on praying to God for pardon.

A Remarkable Dream.

While Saul was praying, there was a man in Damascus who had a dream. This man was the same Ananias that Saul had seen in his dream. He was a very good man, and he had heard that Saul was coming from Jerusalem to sieze God's people, and to bind them in chains. He was much surprised when God said to him in a dream, Get up, and go into Straight street, and find the house of a man called Judas, and ask for a man called Saul: for Saul is now praying to me; and he had seen you in a dream coming in and putting your hand on him, that he may be able to see.

Ananias answered the Lord: Many people have told me of this man, and of how much harm he has done to the holy people in Jerusalem; and how he has come here with leave from the chief priests to bind all that call on the Lord Jesus.

But the Lord answered Ananias: Go thy way, for I have chosen him to tell many people about me—Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel—and I shall show him that he must suffer a great deal for my sake.

Then Ananias went to Straight street, and entered into the house of Judas, and went up into Saul's room, and put his hands on Saul, and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you as you came to this place, has sent me to you, that you may receive your sight. As he said this, something like skin fell from Saul's eyes, and Saul found he was able to see. Soon afterwards he was baptized, and then he ate food, and he grew strong again.

Saul stayed a good while in Damascus, and he became great friends with all the people of the Lord in that city. Those very people that he once meant to send to prison were now his dearest friends. He went to the synagogues, and preached there about Jesus Christ, that he was the Son of God.

After Saul had been preaching a little while in Damascus, he left the city to go and live in the desert. There was a desert place very near Damascus, called Arabia. You remember that Jesus himself went into a desert, or wilderness, for forty days, at the beginning of his preaching. Saul did the same, though he did not go into the same wilderness as Jesus did, for Jesus went into the wilderness on the border of Judea.

The Jews Try to Kill Him.

Jesus in his desert was tempted of the devil; but we believe that Saul in the desert of Arabia was taught by Jesus. We think he saw his face there, and heard his voice. How happy Saul must have been in the desert, if he met Jesus there; and we think he did, because he often tells us how he was taught everything by Jesus Christ, and nothing by man.

But Saul might not stay long in the desert. He returned to Damascus, to preach more boldly than ever about Jesus. The Jews grew very angry at hearing him praise Jesus so much, and declare he was alive.

They were so angry that they determined to try and kill him. But how could they do it?

They knew that the governor of Damascus was an enemy to Jesus. Aretas was the king of Arabia, and Damascus belonged to him. King Aretas lived far away from Damascus, but he had placed a governor in Damascus with many soldiers under him.

The Jews went to the governor and told him they wanted to kill Saul. They asked him to lend them soldiers to help them to seize Saul. They placed some soldiers at one of the gates, and some more soldiers at another of the gates, and they commanded them to stay there night as well as day, and to seize Saul if he came near. Saul heard of these soldiers being at the gates, so he did not try to go through the gates.

On His Way to Jerusalem.

The believers in Damascus loved Saul, and they found out a way of saving him from the unbelieving Jews.

They took him to a house built by the wall, with a window looking out of the city into the fields. To this house they took Saul secretly. There were large baskets in the city, used for holding rubbish before it was thrown away. Into such a large basket Saul got, and he was then let down by a rope into the fields. It was in the night when he was let down.

Saul got out of the basket and walked away—a lonely traveller.

He set his face to go to Jerusalem. Whom did he wish to see there? Peter. He wanted to see Peter, who had preached the first sermon after Christ's resurrection.

So he sat out on his journey, walking over the same ground that he had gone over three years ago. But how different he was three years ago from what he is now.

Then he was proud—now he is very humble; then he had all the priests for his friends—now he has them for his enemies; then he hated Jesus—now he loves him more than his own life. How thankful he feels to God as he walks along the road to Jerusalem! Though alone, he is not unhappy—though poor, he feels rich—though many want to kill him, he is not afraid.

After a journey of many days through the land of Israel, Saul arrived at Jerusalem. When he had last been there, what harm he had done in the city! But now he came to do good, and to save sinners by his preaching.

He wanted first to see Peter. But he did not know Peter. So he went to the disciples, or believers. There were so many of them that it was easy to find them. Some of them remembered his cruel conduct in old times when he lived there, and how he helped at the stoning of Stephen.

They Could Hardly Believe It.

When Saul told them that he had been changed, the disciples did not believe him; they thought he was deceiving them by pretending to be a believer; they thought he wanted to find them out, and then to give them up to the high priest. How much Saul must have been grieved at the sheep taking him for a wolf, when he was now a sheep himself!

One of the disciples was of a very kind disposition, kinder than the rest, though all were kind. His name was Barnabas. He had pity on Saul, and he believed all he said. He said to Saul, Do you want to see Peter? I will bring you to him. So Barnabas took him by the hand and led him to Peter's house. There was only one other apostle in Jerusalem—James (the brother of Jude)—who wrote the Epistle.

Barnabas brought Saul to Peter and James, and told them of the light that once shone near Damascus, and how Jesus was seen in the heaven, and how he said to Saul, Why persecutest thou me? He related the whole of the wonderful history. Then Peter believed that Saul was sincere, and he asked Saul to stay at his house fifteen days. And James, too, was kind to Saul. It was pleasant to see the apostles giving their right hands to Saul and Barnabas, and receiving them as brothers. From this time they might all be seen going about Jerusalem together.

There could not be a happier season than was enjoyed by the four believing friends going about Jerusalem. Peter and James, Saul and Barnabas, were now most affectionate friends.

Story of Barnabas.

I must tell you a little more of Barnabas. His name had been Joses. It was changed to Barnabas, or, rather, Barnabas was added to Joses, so that his name now was Joses Barnabas. Why? Barnabas means "Son of Consolation, or Comfort." This was his character, as he showed in his behavior towards Saul. He was a Jew, even a Levite. He had fields, and sold them that the money might be given to the poor.

He did not give it to the poor himself; he laid it down at the apostles' feet, that the apostles might give it to whom they chose. A man might do all this, and yet have no charity or love in his heart; then his gifts would be worthless, for it is written, Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. But Barnabas was full of love in his heart. How much Saul must have loved him for bringing him to Peter!

It was a great pleasure for Saul to get acquainted with Peter, for Peter knew the Lord well while that Lord was a man of sorrows on earth, but Saul had only seen him in glory. Of those four friends, two had known him well on earth, and two had believed on him after he was ascended; at least we suppose that Barnabas had only lately believed, and we know that Saul was an enemy until lately.

Jews Offended at His Preaching.

And where was the loving John. He was not in Jerusalem; so Saul had not the pleasure at this time of seeing him. Saul could not spend all his time in talking with his dear friends about Jesus. He desired to preach to the unbelievers.

Saul preached boldly in Jerusalem, and he made the Jews very angry by declaring that Jesus was the Son of God They began, like the Jews in Damascus, to make plans to kill him secretly, but the Lord saved him from being murdered.

One day Saul was in the temple praying, when the Lord sent him a dream, and said to him, Make haste, and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for the Jews will not believe what you say about me. Saul was surprised, and he said, Do not they know how I once put believers in prison, and beat them; and how I was standing by when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, and how I kept the clothes of those who killed him? But the Lord still said, Depart, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.

Then Saul told his friends that he must leave Jerusalem, for the Lord had commanded him to go away, because the Jews intended to kill him.

When the disciples heard this, they were very anxious to send him away. They took him down secretly to the seaside. There was a fine town built in honor of the Roman Emperor Cæsar, and it was called Cæsarea.

Saul had to go about a hundred miles to this town. He must at first have travelled by night to hide himself from the Jews.

What good man was living there who would be glad to see Saul? Philip the deacon. Perhaps he had not seen Saul since the stoning of Stephen. How much changed Saul was since that time! That fierce, proud countenance was now gentle, afflicted, and humble.

But perhaps Saul had no time to visit Philip at Cæsarea, for his friends were in great haste to send him far away. There were ships in the harbor of Cæsarea. One was setting sail for Tarsus. That was Saul's native place, and there he wished now to go. How far off was it? Three hundred miles over the seas. Saul got into the ship. At last he came to land. He did not get out of the ship there; he had to sail twelve miles more up a river, till he came near to a great mountain. Here was Tarsus. Here was his home. Here he had played when a child in his parents' sight. What would his old playfellows say when they heard he believed in Jesus?

Peter at Lydda.

Now we must leave Saul at Tarsus, and return to Peter. We heard last of his being at Jerusalem when Saul paid his visit there. But Peter was not always there, for the apostles used to go on journeys to preach.

Once Peter went to a village among the hills, just twenty miles from Jerusalem. It was called Lydda. There were some of Christ's holy people living there, and Peter liked to visit them. One man was very ill indeed. His name was Æneas. He had the palsy, and he was so helpless that he had kept his bed eight years. Peter went to him, and said, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee well. Arise, and make thy bed. Immediately Æneas arose, and made his bed.

You observe that Peter did not say, I make thee well; for he knew he had no power in himself. All the people round about wished to see Æneas; and when they saw this poor paralytic become quite strong, they turned to the Lord.

But Peter did another greater miracle. About twelve miles from Lydda there was a town by the seaside, called Joppa. Some people from Lydda went to Joppa, and said to the people there, The apostle Peter has come to see us, and he has cured a poor man who could not move a limb, and made him quite strong, by the power of Jesus.

Grief at the Death of Dorcas.

When the people of Joppa heard this, they wished much to see Peter, for a very good woman had just died at Joppa. Her name was Tabitha. She was so kind to poor people that many mourned her death. Her friends washed her dead body, and laid her in an upper room—the best room in the house. Oh, how they longed to bring her to life! Some one said, Oh, if Peter would but come! Oh, let us send to beg him to come!

So the disciples in Joppa sent two men to beg Peter to come very quickly before Tabitha was buried.

Peter came immediately with the two men. He was led into the upper chamber. He heard much weeping and sobbing as he was coming in, and he found the room full of poor widows and saints, the holy friends of Tabitha. The widows showed Peter a great many clothes that they held in their hands, and told him that Tabitha had woven the clothes while she was with them. The name they gave her was Dorcas. They loved Dorcas very much for spending her time in weaving for them.

Peter would not let the widows or the saints remain in the room. He wanted to pray to God alone. So he put the widows and saints out of the room, and when he was quiet and alone he kneeled down and prayed to God, and then he went up to Tabitha's bed, and said, Tabitha, arise! She opened her eyes, and she saw Peter. Then she sat up; Peter gave her his hand to help her up.

As soon as she was standing up he called the widows in, as well as the saints, and showed them their friend. What must have been the delight of all to see her alive! No doubt Dorcas made many more clothes for poor widows before she died again. It was sad for her to die twice, but then her being made alive caused many sinners to turn to the Lord.

Simon the Tanner.

Peter did not return to Jerusalem for a long time afterwards, but he took a lodging in Joppa. It was by the seaside, at the house of a man called Simon. This Simon was a tanner. His trade was to make skins into leather.

While Peter was living at Joppa he lodged with Simon the tanner. He went up one day to the top of the house, which was flat. He wanted to be alone. There was often a little tent in the corner of the housetop, where a man could be shaded from the sun and hidden from all.

Peter went up about twelve o'clock to pray to God. He had taken no breakfast that morning, for he wished to fast as well as to pray. After some time he became very hungry, so he asked the servants to get his dinner ready immediately. While they were getting it ready, he fell into a sort of sleep upon the housetop.

He had a very strange dream in his sleep. He thought that the sky was opened, and that there was let down out of it a great sheet, with the four corners fastened, so that the sheet could hold things. Inside there were all kinds of fourfooted beasts, and some of them were wild; and all kinds of birds, and all kinds of creeping things. What a strange heap they must all have looked in the sheet.

A Strange Command.

Then Peter heard a voice, saying, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. Peter was surprised at hearing this command, for God had given the Jews very strict rules about eating. He had forbidden them to eat of beasts called unclean, such as pigs, hares, horses, and asses. Among birds he had forbidden the Jews to eat of eagles, owls, swans, storks, and many others; and also he had forbidden them to eat of creeping things, lizards, snails, and moles.

So when Peter had looked well at these unclean animals, he answered the voice, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. The voice from heaven replied, Whatever God has made clean, call not thou common.

Three times the voice spoke these words, and then the great sheet of animals was taken up again into heaven.

When the dream was over, Peter went on thinking about it, and wondering what could be the meaning of it.

At that time the Spirit spoke to his mind, saying, Three men are come to your house, and they want you to go with them. Go with them, for I have sent them.

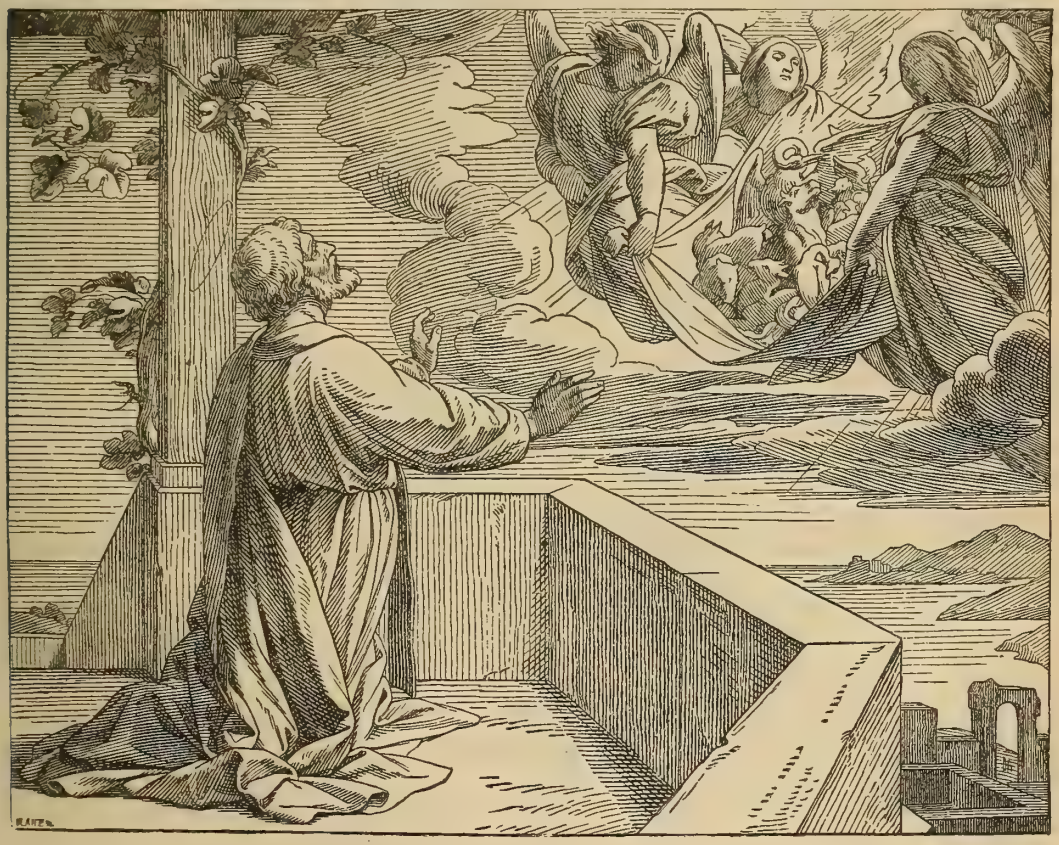
Then Peter went down the stairs from the housetop, and he found three men waiting to see him, just as the Spirit had told him. He said to them, I am the person you want to see. Why are you come for me?

Then the three men replied: Cornelius, a

very good man, was told by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house, that you might tell him how he may be saved.

Peter found that these three men were the servants of Cornelius, and that Cornelius was a great captain. The three men were not Jews; and Cornelius, the master, was not a Jew. They were all Romans. Now they had slept on the way. Peter asked them to stop that night and to sleep in the house where he lodged, and he promised to go with them next day.

He went and told his friends in Joppa what had happened. He said to them, I wish you would go with me to Cæsarea to see Cornelius, the Roman captain.



PETER'S VISION ON THE HOUSETOP.

the Jews called all other nations Gentiles; and they despised them all as common or unclean. Peter saw why the dream had been sent to him; he saw that God did not call these men common or unclean. So Peter promised to go with them.

The three men told Peter they came from Cæsarea, a town fifty miles off. They had not been able to walk so far in one day; so Six of them consented to go with him. Next day the whole party set out on their journey. There were Peter and the six Jews, his friends; there were also the three servants of Cornelius—they were Gentiles.

The travellers walked about twenty miles along the seacoast, and then they rested for the night, though we know not where. Next day they set out again, and they arrived at

Cæsarea in the afternoon. Cæsarea was a very grand town among the rocks of the seashore. It was Herod who had made it so grand, and he had built a palace there. Peter did not go to that palace; he went straight up to the house of Cornelius.

It was four days since Cornelius had seen the angel in his house. Cornelius knew that his servants would be two days going to Joppa, and two days in coming back. So he was expecting Peter to arrive that afternoon, and he had invited all his relatives and his dearest friends to come to his house that day.

When he heard that Peter was at the gate, he went out to meet him. When he saw him, he did not shake hands (as we do with our friends), nor did he embrace him, but he fell at his feet and worshipped him. Peter did not approve this. He gave him his hand, saying, Stand up; for I myself also am a man.

At the House of Cornelius.

Then Cornelius led him into a large room filled with his friends and relatives. They were all Gentiles.

Once Peter would not have gone into a room with any Gentile; but now he would go to Gentiles, just the same as to Jews. He told these Gentiles of his dream, and how the angel had said, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Then Peter asked Cornelius to tell him why he had sent for him.

Cornelius spoke to Peter before all the company, saying, Four days ago I had taken no food, and at three o'clock I prayed in my house, and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing, and he said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy charity to the poor is remembered by God. Send to Joppa, and ask for a man named Simon Peter. He lodges in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the seaside. Ask him to come here. When he comes he will tell thee what thou must do. So I sent immediately for thee; and thou hast done right in coming. We are all assembled here to listen to all that God has commanded thee to say to us.

Then Peter began to preach to these Gentiles. He told them about Jesus—how the Jews had killed him, and how God had raised him from the dead. Peter ended his sermon with these words: Whosoever believeth in him shall receive forgiveness of sins.

A Praise Meeting.

As soon as Peter had spoken, the Holy Ghost fell on all the Gentiles in the room, just as once he had fallen on the Jews; and these Gentiles began to praise God as the Jewish Christians did.

The six Jews who had come with Peter were very much astonished at seeing that God gave the Holy Ghost to Gentiles.

Then Peter said, Can any man forbid us to baptize these men with water, now they have received the Holy Ghost as we did? So he had them baptized. No doubt it was the six Christian Jews from Joppa who baptized them.

Ever since that time Gentiles have always been baptized when they believed in Jesus.

Peter stayed a good while with Cornelius and his friends at Cæsarea. He had a great deal to teach them, and they were anxious to learn. After a while he went again to Jerusalem. He told the saints in Jerusalem all about Cornelius, and these good men were very much pleased, and praised God, saying, God hath given repentance unto the Gentiles.

But very great troubles soon came upon the saints in Jerusalem. Cæsar at Rome appointed Herod to be king of Jerusalem and of all the land.

Who was this Herod? He was not the Herod who killed John the Baptist, and mocked Jesus the Saviour. That Herod had been sent far away by the Emperor Cæsar. This Herod was his nephew, and he was the grandson of the Herod who killed, long ago, the babes of Bethlehem. What a wicked family these Herods were! This Herod commanded his soldiers to seize James, the brother of John, and to cut off his head with a sword.

So now John lost his brother. Those two brothers had been with Jesus on the mount of glory and in the garden of agony. James was one of the three favorites of the Lord, though John was the most beloved of all. He was the first of all the apostles to be killed for the sake of Jesus.

Herod saw that the Jews were pleased with him for killing James, so he thought he would kill Peter too; and he sent soldiers to seize him and to put him in prison; but, as he had heard of his once escaping from prison, he ordered sixteen soldiers to guard him night and day.

Herod fixed the day when Peter was to be killed. The night before that terrible day the saints met together to pray for him. The other apostles had left Jerusalem, lest they also should be killed; but there were many saints still there. They met together in the house of a very good woman named Mary. She was not one of the Marys we have heard of before. She was the sister of that good Barnabas who had once been so kind

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON BY AN ANGEL.

to Saul. Mary and her friends were sitting up all the night. Peter was quietly sleeping in prison. It was the beginning of summer, and it was warm. Peter had taken off his sandals and his upper garment, but he could not take off a chain from each hand, which was fastened to a soldier's hand on each side of him. Suddenly an angel made the dark prison brighter than the day. Yet Peter was so sound asleep that he did not wake till the angel touched him, saying, Arise up quickly. And as Peter rose up the chains fell off his hands.

Peter's Escape from Prison.

Then the angel bade him tighten his clothes round his waist, put on his sandals, and wrap himself in his loose upper garment. All this time the soldiers slept.

The angel said, Follow me. Peter followed, feeling as if he were dreaming. The angel led him past many soldiers that had been placed to watch outside, and brought him to the great iron gate. Though it had bolts and bars, it opened without key and without hand, as if it had opened itself.

The angel brought him down one street, and then departed.

When Peter found himself alone he stopped to think of what had happened. He saw that God had set him free and saved him from death. He had heard that the saints were sitting up at night to pray for him in Mary's house. So he went there. He knocked at the door of the porch, and Rhoda the maid came to the door. You know the history—how, when she heard Peter's voice outside, saying, Let me in, her joy was so great that she forgot to open the door, but ran into the house to tell his friends that Peter was there, and how they would not believe her, but said it was some angel that took care of Peter.

Peter, however, went on knocking, till many friends rushed to the door and saw his face. They were inclined to make much noise in their joy, but Peter made a sign for them to be quiet, as noise might have been heard by their enemies. When they were quiet Peter told them how the Lord had delivered him. He then said, Go and tell this to James and the brethren.

It was James the brother of Jude that he meant—the same James that Saul had seen. Then Peter went away to some place that Herod did not know of.

As soon as it was day the soldiers were ready to lead out Peter to die, but they could not find him. They could not think what had become of him.

Herod heard that Peter was missing, just as he was expecting to see him led forth in chains. He sent for the soldiers who had the charge of him, and asked them where he was; and when they could not tell him, he had them all put to death, instead of Peter.

Herod On His Throne.

Afterwards this cruel man made a journey to Cæsarea. That was the place where Cornelius lived. It was a very grand city, and there was a grand palace in it for King Herod. There was another grand building in it, where the multitude often came to see shows of men wrestling and beasts fighting.

Herod's chief servant was named Blastus. This Blastus told Herod that some men were come from Tyre in a ship, and that these men wanted to ask the king's pardon for something they had done to affront him.

Herod agreed to see the men from Tyre, and he fixed a day for their coming to the grand building. A multitude assembled to hear Herod speak to the men of Tyre. There were stone seats for the multitude from the floor to the ceiling, all round this

vast hall, and there was a great purple throne for Herod in the midst.

Herod wished to look very splendid and glorious that day. He was dressed in glittering robes of silver, which when the sun shone dazzled the eyes of the beholders. Blastus brought in the men of Tyre to hear the king's speech.

Then Herod made a speech to the people, and he used such fine words that the people shouted and cried out, It is the voice of a god and not of a man! This was a wicked thing to say. I am sure if Cornelius was there he did not join in the shout. Herod felt pleased with the words. He liked to be thought a god.

Three Wicked Kings.

But God was so much displeased with the words that he sent his angel to make Herod ill that very moment. He felt such horrible pain that he could not stay on his throne, and he was carried by his servants to his bed. Then his flesh was eaten by worms while he was still alive. No doctor could cure him, and in five days he died. Thus every one saw how unlike he was to a god.

God showed, by sending him this loathsome disease, how much he hates pride—even a proud thought. His sin was, liking to be called a god, and not giving Jesus the glory.

We have heard of three Herods, and all were very wicked.

The first killed the babes of Bethlehem.

The second killed John the Baptist, and mocked Jesus.

And the third killed James, and would have killed Peter if he could.

They were all proud of being kings, and they all hated the true King of the Jews.

Do you remember where Saul had gone when he left Jerusalem? He had gone to his own country—his native city—Tarsus.

At Tarsus he had played when he was a little boy; at Tarsus he had sat on his mother's knee; at Tarsus he had been taught to repeat his first Jewish prayers.

Now he could tell his parents (if they were alive) about Jesus; now he could tell his old playmates about him who was crucified at Jerusalem a little while ago. But he knew he must not stay there always, for God had chosen him to preach to all nations.

One day a man arrived in Tarsus, inquiring for Saul. Who was this man? Saul's kindest friend. When the apostles had turned away from Saul this man had taken him by the hand, and begged them to receive him as a brother. This man was Barnabas. His name was Son of Consolation, or Comfort. Was not Saul glad to see him? Oh yes! glad indeed.

Barnabas had a great deal to tell him. He told him that he had come from a heathen city, where many people had turned unto the Lord. Come with me, said he, to the city of Antioch; for we want you there to teach the heathen who have just turned to the Lord.

A Beautiful City.

Saul willingly went with Barnabas to the city of Antioch, in Syria. It was a very grand city, full of fine houses, and beautiful gardens, and heathen temples; but there were quiet rooms in it, where many believers met together to worship the Father and the Son. In this city a new name was given to believers in Christ. They were call Christians, and they have kept that name, even to this day.

Saul and Barnabas spent a whole year in Antioch, preaching to the new Christians. Once only they took a journey to Jerusalem.

The Christians at Antioch sent them there to give money to poor saints, as bread was very scarce and dear. This was a proof of their love for Jesus, as it was at Jerusalem that Jesus died and rose again.

While Saul and Barnabas were living at Antioch, in Syria, the Holy Ghost said to the Christian teachers, Let Barnabas and Saul go to the work I have called them to do. So the other Christian teachers prayed, and sent them out to preach to the heathen.

And they took with them a young man, named John Mark. He was the nephew of Barnabas, and his uncle was fond of him, and liked to have him with him.

They Went to Cyprus.

Where did they first go? They went to the native country of Barnabas. Saul had once gone to his native place, Tarsus, and now Barnabas wished to go to his. Barnabas had been born in a very large and beautiful island, called Cyprus.

Saul and Barnabas sailed to Cyprus in a ship. They could easily get there in a day. When they landed at Salamis, the port, they found themselves among orange groves and apricot gardens. The hills were covered with vines, and the green pastures were sprinkled over with milk-white flocks. But this sweet country was made hateful by the wicked ways of its people. The two apostles preached everywhere they could. They went all through the island preaching. The island is about one hundred miles long.

At the farther end, there was a city called Paphos, where the governor lived. His name was Sergius Paulus. He was a Roman, and was king or governor under Cæsar at Rome, just as Pontius Pilate had been king in Jerusalem.

But he was a much wiser man than Pilate. When he heard of the preaching of the wonderful strangers, he wanted to hear them preach, and so he sent for them, that he might learn about the true God.

The two apostles went into the palace of the governor, hoping to lead him to believe in Jesus.

There was a very wicked man in the room, His name was Bar-jesus. He was a Jew, and had a Jewish name, meaning the Son of Jesus, but he was really the son of Satan. He had another name, Elymas, meaning Wise Man—for he professed that he got wisdom from the unseen world, and he pretended to do wonders. He was a wizzard, or one who knew the wise art. He was a sorcerer and a conjurer. This wicked Jew could not bear to hear of Jesus, and he tried to turn away the governor from believing in him. We do not know what he said, only that he spoke against the Gospel.

Punished with Blindness.

Saul then turned towards him and fixed his eyes upon him, saying, O full of all subtility and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness! the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.

Immediately this wicked man found himself in darkness, and he spread out his hands, hunting for some one to lead him by the hand.

The governor, when he saw this miracle, believed in the Lord. What a just punishment this sorcerer had! He tried to keep the governor in darkness of heart, that he should not see the Light of the world. How this punishment must have reminded Saul of the time when he was made blind.

Saul hoped that this sorcerer might have his sight returned one day, for he said to him, Thou shalt not see the sun for a season. He did not say he should never see it again; but

no one knows whether Bar-jesus ever repented, or whether he died a blind sinner.

After this visit to Cyprus you will never hear Saul spoken of any more. From this time his name is Paul. No one knows why his name was changed; perhaps it was because Paul was a Roman name and suited him, now he preached to the Romans and other Gentiles. Saul was only a Jewish name.

Paul and Barnabas soon left the island of Cyprus. They wanted to go from land to land to preach the Gospel. They set sail from Paphos, crossed the sea in a ship, and came to the great country called Asia. They landed near a town called Perga, on the banks of a river, under high and steep rocks. Beyond they saw great mountains with tops covered with snow.

It was at Perga that John Mark gave great sorrow to his uncle and to Paul. He said he would go back to Jerusalem, where his mother Mary lived.

What was his reason? He was not ill. Then he would have had a good reason for going away.

Mark's Courage Fails.

It is possible he was afraid to go on. Perhaps he did not like the thought of climbing up those snowy mountains, nor creeping along dark, rocky paths, where robbers lay hid in the caves, ready to burst out upon travellers. Perhaps he was afraid lest other men as wicked as Bar-jesus should scoff at him, and put him in prison or kill him. We cannot tell what were the feelings of John Mark, but we think he had not courage to bear the troubles of the way.

He found a ship going from Perga to the coast near Jerusalem, and he sailed in it. Did not his heart reproach him for leaving the holy apostles in the midst of their journey? We know not how soon he felt sorry for what he had done; but we know that in the end he proved a brave and zealous man, and wrote the Gospel called by his name, Mark. This John Mark has the honor of being one of the four evangelists.

Paul and Barnabas went on their journey together. They travelled on foot over cold mountains to a country called Pisidia.

A Strange Building.

They had left the mountains behind, and they had reached a wilderness scattered over with lakes and bogs. At last they came to a large city on the top of a low hill. This city was called Antioch.

That is a name we have heard before. You have heard of Antioch in Syria; but this city was Antioch in Pisidia. The other Antioch was not far from the sea; this Antioch was on a flat land near the mountains.

On the Sabbath day the apostles go to the synagogue. It is a strange building of a round shape, with seats rising one above another. In the middle is a high wooden table, where an old man with a long beard reads out of a scroll he holds in his hand; he reads in Hebrew, and an interpreter translates into Greek: for all the people around understand Greek. After the old man, or the president, has done reading the scroll, he has it carefully rolled up and put into a large chest; he then sends a message to Paul and Barnabas, asking them to preach.

Paul rose up and began his sermon. He told the history of the Saviour's death and resurrection. He said near the end of the sermon these words: Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

The Jews were very angry at the sermon, and went out murmuring against Paul; but the Gentiles stayed behind to beg him to preach the next Sabbath about Jesus.

These Gentiles were called proselytes; they had already turned from idols to believe in the true God, and now they would not leave the apostles, but followed them about, hoping to hear more about Jesus. Paul and Barnabas during the whole week tried to persuade those who believed to continue firm and steadfast in the faith of Jesus.

The second Sabbath of Paul's visit there was a great stir in the place; almost the whole city came to the synagogue to hear the word of God.

The Jews were so angry to see such a large congregation that they spoke against Jesus, and contradicted all that Paul said. This wicked conduct displeased the two holy apostles. Before they left the synagogue they said, As the Jews will not hear the word of God, we return to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were glad to hear this, and many more believed. But the Jews grew more and more angry, till at last they made the preachers leave the city.

Persecuted at Iconium.

When the two apostles left Antioch in Pisidia they went to another city. God gave the name of apostles to both of them; for though they were not of the number of the twelve, they were both sent forth by the Holy Ghost, who is God. None are called apostles but those whom God himself—Father, Son, or Spirit—sent forth.

The apostles went on their way till they came to a city sixty miles off. It was called Iconium. The two apostles went again into a synagogue, and preached again to the Jews and also to those Gentiles who had turned to the true God—the proselytes. But the unbelieving Jews set the Gentiles against the apostles and all the Christians.

The apostles stayed a long while in Iconium, and preached very boldly about Jesus, and did many miracles to prove that their word was true. There was so much strife between the unbelievers and the believers, that it was very hard for the apostles to bear the treatment they met with; but they were ready to suffer persecution for the truth's sake.

At last they heard that a plan was made by their enemies to stone them. Then they thought it was right for them to escape. They left Iconium and passed through a country where shepherds fed their flocks, till they came to a town named Lystra. The people of Lystra had taken Jupiter for their god, and had built him a handsome temple, and had placed in it an ivory image of Jupiter—as a very fine, grand-looking man.

They were Called Gods.

In Lystra the apostles preached the Gospel. A poor cripple, who had never walked, sat at Paul's feet while he was preaching. He believed in Jesus crucified for his sins. Paul fixed his eyes on him, and seeing he had faith, he said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. Immediately the man sprang up and began to walk.

When the people saw what Paul had done, they cried out, The Gods have come down to us, looking like men! This was said in the common language of the country, and not in Greek. The apostles did not understand what the people said, or they would have told them at once that they were not gods.

So the apostles went to their home in the city, while the people went to the idol priest to ask him to bring oxen and garlands of flowers to the gates. When Paul and Barnabas heard that oxen were going to be sacrificed to them they were very much grieved.

The people thought Barnabas was Jupiter, the king of heaven, because he was tall and grand-looking; and they thought Paul was

Mercury, because he spoke well—and Mercury was the god of fine speaking.

The apostles were dreadfully hurt when they knew that the oxen were to be sacrificed in their honor, and they tore their clothes and ran in among the people, saying, We are men like yourselves, and we preach that you may turn to the true God who made heaven and earth. Yet the apostles could hardly persuade the people to give up their plan of sacrificing to them.

Stoned and Dragged Out of the City.

But they had not long to suffer from being too much honored; for those who would have been their worshippers were easily changed into their murderers.

And this is how it came to pass: Some Jews came from Antioch, and some Jews came from Iconium, full of hatred against the apostles. They easily set the people of Lystra against them. Nothing now would satisfy these wicked men but killing the apostles. They stoned Paul upon the spot. When he seemed dead they dragged his body out of the city. The believers would not leave that dear body, but stood over it lamenting; suddenly the body moved, rose up, and walked into the city. What joy for Barnabas and all who loved Paul!

He stayed one night only among his murderers. The next day he left for Lystra, accompanied by Barnabas. Paul must have felt great pain while he was being stoned. Did he not then think of Stephen, whose pain he once witnessed? Then he rejoiced at the sight; now he bitterly lamented the sin.

What a terrible event was the stoning at Lystra! Did Paul go on his journey after that? Yes, he did. He went to one city more, called Derbe. There the apostles preached the Gospel and taught many.

Then they determined to return by the way they came. They saw again the believers in Lystra, in Iconium, and in Antioch in Pisidia. Everywhere Paul and Barnabas entreated the believers to continue trusting in Jesus. They appointed elders to teach, and they prayed with them and commended them to the Lord. At last they came to Perga, where John Mark had once left them. From a port near Perga they set sail, and came back to Antioch in Syria.

When they returned they asked all the Christians to come together to hear them give an account of their journey. They told the Christians about Sergius Paulus, in the island of Cyprus, and of many more Gentiles turning to the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas lived in Antioch in Syria for a long while, teaching the word of the Lord. During the time they lived in Antioch they once paid a visit to Jerusalem. The reason they went there was to settle a dispute.

Great Rejoicing.

This was the dispute: Some Jews came down to Antioch, saying that Gentiles ought to observe all the ceremonies that Moses taught, such as sacrifices and circumcision. Paul and Barnabas said that Gentiles need not observe these laws of Moses. But the other Jews would not agree to what they said. So Paul and Barnabas, and some other holy men, went to Jerusalem to consult the apostles. As they went along they preached at places by the way, and told the history of the conversion of many Gentiles. What they related caused great joy among the brethren.

When Paul and Barnabas arrived at Jerusalem they saw many believers, and told them the same history. Paul had seen Peter and James before, but now he saw

John for the first time. What joy for Paul to see him who had leaned on Jesus' bosom!

All the apostles and elders agreed to meet together to consider about the Gentiles keeping the old laws of Moses. They were all of one mind about not troubling the Gentiles with the ceremonies of Moses. The brethren in Jerusalem wrote a letter to the brethren in Antioch saying what they thought. Paul and Barnabas and other brethren took this letter back to Antioch; they read it at a meeting of the Christians there, and all who heard this letter were much comforted.

ANTIOCH.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PAUL AND BARNABAS SEPARATE—THE YOUNG MAN TIMOTHY—PAUL AND SILAS AT PHILIPPI—THE HOUSE OF LYDIA—CASTING OUT AN EVIL SPIRIT—LOCKED UP IN THE OLD PRISON—AN EARTHQUAKE—THE JAILOR'S FRIGHT—LEAVING THESSALONICA BY NIGHT—AT BEREA—ARRIVAL AT ATHENS—PAUL PREACHING ON MARS' HILL—THE CITY OF CORINTH—STORY OF GALLIO—A NEW PREACHER FROM EGYPT—AQUILA AND PRISCILLA—APOLLOS PREACHING IN GREECE.

ZEAL in the new cause made the disciples at Jerusalem ready for any toil or sacrifice, and so when Paul and Barnabas were leaving, they took with them several holy men. One of these was a prophet called Silas. He became a great friend of Paul's, and he liked to stay with him at Antioch when the other brethren went back to Jerusalem.

At last Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go again and see the people to whom we preached in our journey. Barnabas was quite ready to go. The next question was, Who shall go with us? Barnabas said, I will take my nephew, John Mark. No, said Paul, he shall not go with us. Why not? said Barnabas. Because he left us on our journey. Barnabas said that he would like to try him again. But Paul would not try him again.

Neither Paul nor Barnabas would give up to the other. At the end it was settled that they must part from one another. Barnabas took Mark with him and set sail for Cyprus, his own country, where he had once preached the Gospel.

Paul chose for his companion Silas, the prophet, and he went to his own native place, Tarsus, where he had once preached the Gospel.

He went over some very high mountains, called Tarsus (or the bull)—mountains with caps of snow on their heads—and he soon came to Lystra, where he had once been stoned. He was not afraid of going there again. This was his third visit. This time the people neither stoned him, nor wanted to offer sacrifice to him.

Young Timothy

Here he found a young man named Timothy. He felt a great affection for this Timothy. Timothy's mother was a Jewess. She had taught Timothy to know the Scriptures when he was quite a child. His grandmother also had taught him. But he did not know about Jesus till Paul preached at Lystra the first time, just before he was stoned. Paul heard a very good character of Timothy from all the Christians at Lystra. He wished very much to have him as a companion on his journey. Timothy was quite ready to go. These two were like father and son. Paul had no son of his own, and he was glad to have Timothy for his son. He called him his dearly beloved son.

Now there were three travelling together—Paul, Silas, and young Timothy On the first journey there were three also, Paul, Barnabas, and young Mark. But Timothy was more faithful than Mark had been. He was indeed a comfort to Paul.

Paul long afterwards reminded Timothy of persecutions and afflictions which came unto him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions he endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered him.

A Wonderful Dream.

These three friends travelled about Asia together. I do not mean the great Asia, but the little Asia that you will see on the map just above Cyprus. One day they came to the town called Troas. It was by the seacoast.

One night Paul had a wonderful dream. He saw a man standing and speaking very earnestly to him, saying, Come over and help us. He knew that the man came from Macedonia. Perhaps the man in the dream said where he came from, or perhaps Paul knew by his dress and language to what country he belonged. When Paul awoke he told his dream to his companions. Luke was one of them.

We do not know where he first saw Luke. Paul must have been very glad to get Luke for a companion. Luke was a very learned, clever man, and he wrote this history we are reading from the Bible; yes, it was Luke who wrote the Acts.

He wrote also one of the histories of our Saviour, and for that reason he is called Evangelist—for the four men who wrote the four histories of Jesus are called the Evangelists. Luke was a physician and doctor. Paul called him the beloved Physician.

There were now four travellers. I need not repeat their names. They must have been happy together, praying and singing hymns to Jesus. The four friends set sail in a little ship. They were two days on the voyage. The second day they arrived at the seacoast of Macedonia, the country of the man in the dream.

They went to a fine city called Phillippi. It was built on a great plain close by a river. Very few Jews lived in this city, so there was no synagogue in it. But there was a little house for prayer close by the river side.

On the Jewish Sabbath-day—which was Saturday—the four ministers went to this prayer house. They found a few women at the prayer-meeting. The men, perhaps, would not come.

All at the House of Lydia.

The ministers sat down and spoke to the women. There was one woman there who listened most attentively. Her name was Lydia. Her trade was selling a purple dye fit for the robes of kings. This woman came from Asia to sell her purple dye, but she discovered in that meeting a treasure more precious than the purple of kings. She found the Lord Jesus. While Paul was speaking about his love, God opened Lydia's heart.

After the service she spoke to Paul and told him that she believed in Jesus, and that she wished to be baptized. Paul approved of her so well that he had her baptized; and also her family and servants. Probably they went down to the river close by.

Then Lydia asked the four ministers to do her a great favor. It was, to come to her house and live there as long as they stayed in Philippi.

It would cost a great deal to get food for four men, but Lydia loved them all for the sake of Jesus. At first they refused; but she pressed them so much that they consented to go to her house.

How happy were Paul and his friends when they first came to Philippi! You do not forget their names, Silas, Timothy, and Luke. Nobody ill-treated them, and Lydia loaded them with kindness. But soon there was a great change.

The four ministers went very often to the house of prayer. There they used to preach as well as pray. A young slave-girl once met them as they were going, and she followed them, crying out, These men are the servants of God, who show unto us the way of salvation.

How strange it was for a girl to cry out in this way in the streets! She was a poor, miserable girl. The devil had come into her, and made her say wonderful things. Her masters were wicked men, who sent her out to get money by saying what the devil told her. She was called a sorceress.

The four ministers were grieved to hear her words, but they said nothing at first.

Paul and Silas Arrested.

Another day the young girl met the ministers again. Another day she met them again; and so she went on, following them, and calling after them, day after day.

One day Paul knew that Jesus would give him the power to cast out the spirit in the girl, so he turned and said, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And immediately the spirit came out of her.

Was it not a happy thing for this poor girl to be delivered from the tormenting devil? For though what she had said of Paul was true, she told many lies, by which she had got money for her masters.

Those wicked men grew very angry. They said, We shall get no more money by our slave telling people what will happen. So they went to meet the good men. They caught hold of Paul and Silas, and dragged them to the market-place. They complained of them to the judges, saying, These men are Jews, and they are a great trouble to our city, for they teach us new customs.

The multitudes joined in abusing them. No doubt they did not like the girl's being stopped from telling them what she fancied was going to happen, so they were very angry with Paul and Silas.

Whipped with Rods.

The judges were ready to please the people, and so instead of judging them, they ordered their men to beat them. The clothes of Paul and Silas were torn off their backs, and they were beaten with rods. Every stroke of the rod left a red stripe upon the flesh of these holy men. I do not know what number of stripes they had to bear, but the number was more than forty. It was only the Jews who gave no more than forty. The Gentiles gave any number of stripes.

The cruel judges sent Paul and Silas to prison with their stripes all bleeding, and they ordered the keeper of the prison not to let them escape.

The keeper, or jailer, was as cruel as the judges. He gave them no food, nor did he bind up their wounds; but he thrust them into a dungeon under ground, and placed their feet in the stocks. There they sat—unable to move their legs or to draw their feet out of the holes in the board—unable to lie down or to stand up.

Where were Luke and Timothy? They had not been seized by their enemies. How much grieved they must have been when they heard what had happened to their dear friends! What must Timothy have felt for his father in the Lord. We were shamefully entreated at Philippi, said Paul to the Thessalonians.

Paul and Silas were sitting in the stocks at night, when a sound was heard from their dungeon. Was it the voice of weeping and wailing? No, it was the voice of singing! And what was the singing about? It was the praises of God the prisoners were singing.

What could they praise God for? Did they praise him for letting them be thrust into a horrible dungeon? Yes! They praised him for letting them suffer for the sake of Jesus, because they knew they should rejoice with him when he came again in his glory.

The other prisoners heard them sing. They were most of them thieves or murderers—wicked men, who deserved to be punished. But now we hope the singing turned their hearts to God; for the apostles sang about Christ. They sang such a song as, Worthy is the Lamb, for he was slain for us.

Suddenly a dreadful sound was heard: it was the earth moving up and down—God had sent an earthquake.

He Fell Down Trembling.

So great was the earthquake that it shook the dungeon, opened the doors, and undid the chains. The apostles found their feet were set free from the holes in the boards. They could easily run away. But they did not move, because they knew it was God's will they should stay. Nor did any of the prisoners escape, though they easily could.

The keeper was asleep, and was awakened by the earthquake. When he saw the doors standing open he felt sure the prisoners must be gone. He knew he had been wrong in sleeping, and he felt afraid that he should be condemned to die by the rulers.

So he took out his sword, and was just going to stab himself, when he heard a loud voice from the dungeon calling out, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Great was his surprise. He called for a light, and sprang into the dungeon, and fell down trembling at the feet of Paul aud Silas—those feet he had once cruelly thrust into the stocks.

Immediately he brought them out of the dungeon, and said to them, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? He wanted now to save his soul. Paul and Silas answered, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and all thy family and servants.

The jailer had heard before that Jesus had died to save him, and now he wished to be baptized. But first he washed the prisoners' stripes, and then was baptized with all his family. This must have been done without any delay.

Afterwards the jailer took the prisoners into his own house, and he brought them food. While they were sitting at supper he felt great joy at the thought of his Saviour, and so did all his family. Though Paul was very happy in the jailer's house, he wanted to go and preach in other towns in Macedonia. Would God deliver him and set him free?

The morning after the terrible earthquake, some men came to the prison with a message. They asked to see the jailer, and they said to him, The judges desire you to let these two men go.

The Judges Alarmed.

The jailer must have been surprised to hear this message, for he remembered that the judges had said to him the night before, Keep these men safely. What caused this change? Probably the judges had been frightened in the night by the earthquake.

The heathen thought that earthquakes showed the anger of their gods. These judges remembered how unjustly they had treated the apostles; and they hoped, if they set them free, they should not be punished by their gods, nor by the emperor of Rome.

The jailer went and gave the message to Paul. He said, The judges direct me to let you go. So depart, and go in peace.

But Paul would not go. He said, I am a Roman. What did Paul mean by that?

Was he not a Jew, born at Tarsus, not in Rome? Yes; but there were other men called Romans. It was a favor that the great emperor at Rome gave to some men as a reward; for if a man was called a Roman, no judge could condemn him, unless he first proved him to be guilty, and unless witnesses proved that he deserved punishment. All our people enjoy this privilege, but the heathen had no such privilege unless they were Romans.

Out of Prison.

The judges had condemned Paul and Silas without any trial, and the great Cæsar at Rome might have punished the judges for their behavior. So Paul sent back this message: Let the judges come themselves and fetch us out.

So the messengers went back to the judges and said, Those prisoners are Romans, and they say that you have beaten them openly, and that you must now come and fetch them out yourselves.

Then the judges were frightened lest they should get into disgrace at Rome. They did not like going themselves to the prison, but to avoid disgrace they went.

How strange it must have looked to see these judges in their handsome dresses, begging the two prisoners in their poor garments to come out of the prison! They begged them not only to come out of the prison, but to leave the city as soon as they could.

The prisoners left the prison with marks of cruel stripes on their backs, but with hearts full of joy to think that the jailer had turned to God.

Where did they first go? To the house where they had been staying before their beating and imprisonment. They went to the house of Lydia. There they found Luke and Timothy. How much grief all those friends must have felt the whole night long! But joy had come in the morning.

All the Christians in the town came to see Paul and Silas, and to hear about their imprisonment. It was sad news for them to hear that Paul and Silas must leave them; but then Luke and Timothy were to stay behind, and this must have been a great comfort.

Paul and Silas set out on their journey with the stripes still fresh upon their backs. In this state they travelled nearly a hundred miles.

A good road led to the largest city in Macedonia—Thessalonica. It was once built by a great general, who called it after the name of his wife, Thessalonica. The apostles must have been three days on their way.

When they arrived they found themselves in a grand city. It was close by the sea, and ships from distant countries brought many fine things to the shore. The shops were full of gay clothing, handsome furniture, and precious jewels.

Paul Works at His Trade.

There was also a synagogue in the city. Paul and Silas went there on the Sabbath, and tried to show the Jews that all the prophets had spoken of Jesus before he came into the world.

A few of the Jews believed, and they were very kind to Paul and Silas. A great many Gentiles turned from idols, and became the servants of God. Paul often went to the houses of the Christians, and taught them more about Jesus.

But he had hard work to get bread; for he did not like to ask for anything, as it would seem as if he preached for the sake of money. But he had been taught a trade when he was a boy. All young Jews were taught to make something when they were young, even those

who had rich parents, for they could not tell how soon they might become poor.

Paul knew how to weave goats' hair into cloth fit for tents. In the evening Paul and Silas would begin their work, and sit up very late, that they might earn enough to buy food for the next day. They worked in the day-time also, when they had time.

But they could hardly earn enough, and so they were very thankful when a kind friend came from Philippi with a present for them. Perhaps it was Lydia sent the present, or it might be the jailer. Very likely it was Timothy who brought it, for he soon came after Paul, though Luke did not come yet.

There were many spiteful, envious Jews at Thessalonica. They were so angry with Paul and Silas that they got a great number of bad men to come with them to seize the apostles. They heard that Paul and Silas were in the house of a good man named Jason. They came to his house, making a great noise, and they tried to break in.

They are Sent Away by Night.

Jason heard the noise, and he hid Paul and Silas. So when the riotous mob rushed into the house, Paul and Silas could not be found. Then the fierce fellows seized Jason and his friends, and brought them to the judges.

But this good Jason was not punished, for the judges let him go.

When he went home, Jason and his friends agreed together that it would be best to send away Paul and Silas that night. They were very sorry to part with them, but they feared lest the wicked people would murder the apostles if they stayed.

That very night Paul and Silas set out in the dark, intending to go to a quiet little town among the fruitful hills. We do not know whether Timothy went with them, or whether he followed them afterwards. The apostles, as they walked, thought of the dear Christians in Thessalonica, and prayed that they might one day see them again.

Paul and Silas had to go nearly fifty miles before they reached the quiet city among the fruitful hills. They could not walk so far in one night.

What the Books Said.

The name of the town was Berea. It was a lovely place, built on the side of a hill, among gardens, streams, and groves. It was not a place often visited by travellers, nor were there many rich people in it.

There was a synagogue in Berea. Paul and Silas went to it on the Sabbath. They must have expected to be scoffed at and contradicted; but these Jews were quite different from the Jews at Thessalonica. They listened to the preaching about Jesus, and they looked in the books of the old prophets to see what was written in them about Jesus.

They found all was true that the apostles told them. In one of the books they saw it was written that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem; in another book, that he was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Then Paul told them that such a lamb was Jesus, when he was crucified for our sins.

Then many of the Jews of Berea believed in Jesus. Many of the Gentiles also believed. The apostles must have felt very happy among these believers; but they soon were made sorrowful.

The wicked Jews of Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching at Berea. They came over the hills to Berea, for they did not care for a journey of fifty miles, if they could only hurt Paul. When they reached Berea, they tried to set the people against the apostles.

The kind Christians of Berea were so much afraid of these wicked men, that they

thought it best to send Paul quite away. Silas and Timothy were to remain at Berea, and Paul was to go away secretly, for fear any other wicked Jews should seize him by the way.

It was very sad for Paul to leave his two dear companions behind, but it was better for the Bereans that Silas and Timothy should stay.

Silas and Timothy: Come to me very quickly.

Paul determined to wait at Athens till they came, for he did not like to be separated long from his dear companions, though he was glad to think they were teaching the new believers at Berea. Timothy had himself been taught when a child to know the Scriptures, and he could help the Bereans to

ANCIENT SHIPS.

Could Paul go quite alone upon his journey? Oh no. The kind Bereans would not let him go alone. Some of them went with him to the seashore, about ten miles off. There they found a ship ready to sail. His kind friends went in the ship with him. They all made a long voyage, and after many days arrived at Athens, a very grand city. Then Paul parted from his Berean friends, and he gave them this message to deliver to

understand what the prophets had written about Jesus.

Paul found himself alone at Athens. This was the first time he had been alone since he had begun this missionary journey. Athens was in Greece. Paul had now left Macedonia, and had entered Greece, often called Achaia.

There was a great deal to be seen in Athens. It was the most famous city of Greece. There never was a city with so many beautiful statues,

pictures, temples and altars. Was Paul pleased at beholding them? No; he was filled with grief, for most of the statues were the images of false gods, and all the temples were the houses of idols.

There was indeed one synagogue where the true God was worshipped, but no place where Jesus was honored as the son of God. Paul went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. In the week he went to the grand market-place.

Sermon on Mars' Hill.

There were many wise heathens in Athens, who were always in the market-place, talking and teaching, under the shade of trees and marble colonnades. Paul went there to talk with them and to teach them about Jesus. These pretended wise men laughed at Paul, and called him a babbler, or prating fool. Some were offended, and said, He wants to set up new gods.

But at last they proposed a plan which pleased Paul very much. These Athenians were fond of hearing new things, so they thought they should like to hear Paul preach about the new things he told them. They led him up a hill in the city, where the judges often sat to give judgment. There were stone seats for the judges. There was a very fine temple on the hill, where Mars, the god of war, was worshipped.

Paul stood up on Mars' Hill to speak of the Prince of Peace. He spoke first of the one true God, who made all things, and of the sin of worshipping idols. He said God commanded them to repent, and that he would judge the world one day by the Man whom he had raised from the dead. Christ was the man that Paul meant.

This is what he said: Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To The Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Many Scoffers.

When the Athenians heard of the resurrection, some began to laugh. Others, who did not mock, said, We will hear about this another day. But there were a few who really believed in Jesus. One of them was a wise and great man, even a judge. Another was a lady.

The Lord showed Paul when he ought to leave a city and where he ought to go.

Paul did not stay long among the scoffers of Athens; for he could do more good in other cities. He set out on his journey, meaning to go to a very large city about fifty miles off.

His way lay by the seacoast. There was the great sea on each side of him, as he travelled alone to Corinth.

Corinth was a far richer city than Athens. It was now the capitol of Greece. The chief pleasure in Athens was to talk about new things; but the chief pleasure at Corinth was to feast and dance and play at games. Once in three years people came from far countries to Corinth to see the games. At these games men ran races, and wrestled together, and and threw spears, and hurled stones, and leaped over fences.

In Corinth there were many gluttons and drunkards, many disorderly people, and many vain, foolish women; but there were not as many learned people, or as many scoffers, as in Athens.

When Paul arrived there he looked out for a lodging. He found two people who were tent-makers, as he was. He thought it would be convenient to live with those of the same trade as himself. These two people were travellers like Paul, and they were also of the same nation. Aquila was a Jew, and his wife Priscilla was a Jewess. Paul sat with them and wove his goats' hair into coarse cloth, close by their sides. As they worked they talked.

PAUL PREACHING ON MARS' HILL.

Aquila and Priscilla had not believed in

Jesus crucified for their sins till Paul told them the wonderful story. But when they did hear about him they believed in him, and they tried to please him in everything.

Every Sabbath Paul went to the synagogue and showed that Jesus was the Christ —the promised Saviour. Aquila and Priscilla heard Paul preach in the synagogue, and they listened very earnestly.

One day Paul had the delight of seeing again his dearest friends, Silas and Timothy. They were just come from Macedonia. Perhaps you wonder they had not come to Paul while he was at Athens. They did come while Paul was at Athens, but he had sent them back to Macedonia, and now they came to Corinth.

Good News from Macedonia.

It was not their fault that they had not come sooner. Paul had written to them to bid them teach the new Christians at Thessalonica and other places, as he was afraid the new Christians might turn back to Satan.

How glad he was to see his dear son Timothy again! He was more glad when he heard good accounts of the believers in Macedonia. He sat down one night, and instead of working at his loom and weaving the goats' hair, he took his pen and began to write on parchment a letter to the believers at Thessalonica. The letter is in the Bible, and is called The First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians. There were no postmen in those days to take letters, and Paul sent it by the hand of the first faithful messenger he could find.

After this time Paul wrote a great many letters, and some of them we can read in our Bibles. He did not write all these letters with his own hand; for it is very likely that his eyes were so weak that he asked his friends to write for him.

At the time that Silas and Timothy arrived the apostle was in want of food. Though he worked so hard he could not earn enough to support him, for there was a famine in the land, and the price of food was six times as much as usual.

Presents from Philippi.

But did not the Corinthians give him anything? Paul would not accept any presents from them, because he knew they would be ready to say he preached in order to get money.

Silas and Timothy brought in their hands presents from Philippi—perhaps from Lydia and the jailer.

The Philippians were the most generous of all the people to whom Paul preached, and they were the only people who sent him presents in his distress. Paul was very grateful for their kindness.

You have heard that Paul was much comforted by the arrival of Silas and Timothy. He was more earnest than ever to preach Jesus in the synagogue. But he could only persuade a few Jews to believe on him as the Son of God.

Most of the Jews grew more and more angry. At last Paul shook his clothes in their sight, and said, that if they perished he was clear of their blood. From this time he would go to the Gentiles. So he went no more to the synagogue, but he did not leave the city. All that believed in Jesus came to hear Paul in a house close by. This house belonged to a good man named Justus.

Among the believers who came to this house was the chief ruler of the synagogue, a man named Crispus. Who would have expected that the chief ruler of the synagogue should believe? All the family of Crispus believed, as well as himself, and they were all baptized by Paul.

A great many more people believed and were baptized. Soon there was quite a large congregation meeting in the house of Justus. But the unbelieving Jews were enraged at seeing so many believe, and Paul feared he should be seized, and beaten and imprisoned.

However at night he had a dream that cheered him much. The Lord appeared to him, and said, Be not afraid, but speak, and do not be silent; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Now Paul knew that many people would turn to the Lord, and that no one would hurt him. He stayed in Corinth a year and a half, and went on teaching the Gospel.

At this time a new governor came to Corinth. His name was Gallio. The Jews seized Paul and dragged him before the governor. What has he done? asked Gallio. The Jews replied, he has been teaching us to worship God in a wrong way.

Paul was just going to open his mouth to defend himself, when Gallio cried out, If this man had done anything wicked I would have judged him, but as it is only about what he says, I will not hear you. The Jews did not like this answer, and wanted to speak more. But Gallio drove them out. Go away! go away! said he. So Paul was set free. In this way God kept his promise that no one should hurt him.

A Splendid City.

After a good while, Paul said he should leave Corinth. He could not always stay in one place, as he must preach the Gospel to many heathen nations. Priscilla and Aquila also wanted to go away. The five friends agreed to sail in the ship.

The first place the ship stopped at was Cenchrea. Paul landed there to have his hair and beard shorn, for he had made the Nazarite's vow a month before. That vow was not to drink wine, nor to be shorn, for a month. He made the vow when delivered from the Jews at Gallio's judgement-seat. He wished to show the Jews that he kept their customs, though he trusted in Jesus for salvation.

There was a good woman at Cenchrea, named Phebe, who received him, and was kind to him while at Cenchrea. She was ready to help all the Christians she saw.

Then Paul returned to the ship and crossed the sea, till he came to Asia. He stopped near a fine city called Ephesus. It was the grandest city in all Asia, with the most splendid temple ever built in honor of an idol. At this grand city Priscilla and Aquila said they must stay and live. Paul and his other companions just landed and rested there for a few days.

He Promises to Return.

Paul preached in the synagogue. The Jews liked what he said so much that they begged him to stay, but Paul told them he could not, as he was hastening to Jerusalem to keep one of the holy feasts. But, said Paul, I will return to you if God will. So, bidding farewell to Priscilla and Aquila, and the kind Ephesians, Paul and his companions set sail again.

He landed at Cæsarea, and went up to Jerusalem. He saw his friends there, and worshipped the Lord in his holy city. It must have been delightful to relate his wonderful history to any apostles who were there. But he did not stay long; he hastened back to Antioch in Syria, the city from which he had set out several years ago.

Thus ended his second missionary journey. It had been indeed a blessed journey, for thousands of heathens had turned to God.

512 HALL OF PILLARS—RUINS OF KARNAK, EGYPT.

In this journey the Gospel was first preached in Europe, for Macedonia and Greece are in Europe.

Story of Apollos.

Leaving Paul at Antioch in Syria, let us go back to Ephesus in Asia.

Soon after Paul left Ephesus, a new preacher appeared at the synagogue. He was a Jew, born in Egypt, who travelled about, and was just come from Rome. It was remarkable that a man so strong in the faith and so earnest in his preaching should come from such a place. The people in Egypt worshipped all sorts of idols. Some of these were animals, and others were the most disgusting reptiles.

At the same time Egypt had many beautiful temples and other buildings. These were very large, had tall and massive pillars, and were covered with inscriptions and figures, which told the story of events long past, or described the idols that were worshipped. One of the famous cities of ancient Egypt was Thebes. On the site of this city, which is now called Karnak, are some of the most remarkable ruins in the world. Here is the Hall of Pillars, which consists of two rows of immense columns standing side by side.

The new preacher who was making a stir at Ephesus had heard of the Jewish religion and believed it, although all around him were people who were ignorant of the true faith. Aquila and Priscilla listened to him, and were much struck, for he was very eloquent; that is, he spoke in beautiful language, and very earnestly. He knew the Old Testament well; he could refer to the prophecies and explain their meaning.

He knew even more than this, (for many Jews knew the Old Testament;) he knew the preaching of John the Baptist, what he said about repentance, and about baptism, and the coming of Jesus: but here he stopped. He knew not that Jesus had been crucified, and risen again, and had sent down the Holy Ghost upon believers.

Aquila and Priscilla listened attentively and they were sorry to find Apollos did not know about Christ; so they got him to come to them, and they told him all about his sacrifice for our sins. How did they know about these things? Paul had instructed them while they were sitting weaving together.

The Gospel in Greece.

This preacher's name was Apollos. You see he was a very humble man, for he was willing to listen, even to a woman, when he found Priscilla could teach him about Christ.

He wished very much to go into Greece, that he might preach in the synagogues, for whenever he preached many came to hear him on account of his eloquence. But he was afraid the brethren in Greece would not know he was a Christian, and would not receive him.

Aquila, Priscilla, and others, said they would write letters to the Christians they knew in Greece. In these letters they said Apollos was a good man, and knew about Christ; and they said, Pray receive and listen to him.

So Apollos took these letters and showed them to the Christians in Greece, and then he preached in the synagogues. The believers were much comforted by all he said. When he preached he showed the Jews what the prophets had said about Jesus in the Scriptures; and he convinced a great many.

The chief cities in Greece or Achaia were Corinth and Athens. The first city in Greece where Apollos preached was Corinth. He heard at Corinth a great deal about Paul, but he had not yet seen him, for Paul was still at Antioch in Syria.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

JOURNEY THROUGH LITTLE ASIA—AT EPHESUS AND CORINTH—WIZZARDS AND DECEIVERS—DIANA'S GORGEOUS TEMPLE—WILD UPROAR AT EPHESUS—THE APOSTLE TRAVELS IN GREECE—STORY OF EUTYCHUS—A SAD PARTING—THE GOSPEL AT TYRE—PAUL AT JERUSALEM—A FURIOUS MOB—PAUL BOUND WITH CHAINS—SCENE BEFORE THE COUNCIL—AN INFAMOUS PLOT—PAUL FINDS FRIENDS IN HIS DANGER.

UITE ready now was Paul for another missionary journey, although he had made two already—the first when he set out with Barnabas and Mark, and the second when he set out with Silas. From both these journeys he had returned safely, after suffering many afflictions. He spent some time at Antioch with the brethren, and then set out again. Whom did he take with him on this third journey?

One of his companions was a young man named Titus. He was a Greek. His native city was Corinth, the capital of Greece, or Achaia. Paul loved Titus much, and called him his son. It seems he loved Timothy still more, for he called him his dearly-beloved son. We are not sure whether Timothy set out on this journey with Paul. Silas was left behind at Jerusalem, as we think. Some Macedonians may have accompanied him, but we are not sure of their names.

Where did Paul and Titus go? They went through Little Asia. This Little Asia was divided into Provinces. One was called Cilicia. Tarsus was in Cilicia. There Paul was born; his relations lived there. It is probable Paul visited his native city.

He went afterwards into a province called Galatia. It was a wild, but warm-hearted people who lived in it. Paul had visited Galatia some years before. The people were very fond of Paul at first, till false teachers came and set them against him for a time.

But they readily granted Paul's request. What was it? He had promised the brethren that he would collect money for the poor saints in Jerusalem who were in great distress. You remember there was a famine in most lands, and besides the famine there were persecutions at Jerusalem; so the poor saints were often in great distress.

Meeting Old Friends.

When Paul left Galatia he went to other parts of Asia, and visited Lystra, which was dear to him as Timothy's birthplace. We know not whether Timothy's pious mother, Eunice, was still living.

Paul went through the province of Phrygia, and then went down towards the great city of Ephesus. When he had landed there on his last journey he had promised to return soon, and now he had come; not by sea, as before, but by land. He found there many believers, and among them Aquila and Priscilla, his old friends, whom he had left there at his last visit.

It was a great joy to meet them again: Paul could sit with them as he used, and weave goats' hair into cloth for tents. Thus he earned bread for himself and his companions, and he gave to the poor all he could spare.

Timothy was now with him, and Titus was with him still, and the believers who had followed him from Macedonia. Very happy was this party of Christians. In the evening, while they wove cloth, they would talk about the labors of the day, and praise God for the blessing he gave to their words.

Twelve Ignorant Men.

When Paul arrived at Ephesus, he did not find Apollos there. That eloquent preacher had gone to Corinth a long while before, and was still there. It must have disappointed Paul not to see him.

But there were twelve men at Ephesus, very much like Apollos in not knowing about Jesus, but they had not met with any such teachers as Apollos had found. Why had not Aquila and Priscilla taught them? Perhaps these twelve men had not preached, and so their ignorance had not been seen.

Paul began to talk to these twelve men. He found they believed in the true God, and in the Old Testament, and in the preaching of John the Baptist—but that was all. They did not know about the resurrection of Jesus. Paul said to them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? They replied, We never heard of the Holy Ghost.

Perhaps they meant that they had never heard of the Holy Ghost being given at Pentecost. Unto what, then, were you baptized? inquired Paul. We are baptized unto John's baptism, answered the twelve. Paul then said, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Thus these men were twice baptized. Afterwards Paul laid his hands on them. Then the Holy Ghost was given to them, and they began to speak with other tongues and to prophesy. You remember that none but apostles could bestow these wonderful gifts.

Then Paul appeared again in the synagogue. Those who liked to hear Paul preach, when he paid his first short visit, must have been glad to see him enter the synagogue again. But they liked him less when they heard him boldly declare Jesus to be the only Saviour. They contradicted him, and made objections to all he said.

Paul went on preaching there for three months. At last he could not go any more to the synagogue, for the Jews tried to set the people against the way of salvation by Jesus.

When Paul departed from the synagogue, a man, named Tyrannus, lent him a large room, in which wise men used to give lectures about worldly knowledge. Perhaps this Tyrannus was converted, but we know not his motive for lending this room. Paul invited people to come there every day to be taught; and many came.

A Wonderful Touch.

This teaching went on for two years, and all that lived at Ephesus, and in other cities, could hear the word of the Lord Jesus—Jews as well as Greeks.

And God enabled Paul to do very great miracles. Not only did he cure sick people when he saw them, and touched them, and spake to them, but he did still more. If Paul touched a handkerchief or apron, and it was brought to a sick person, he was made well by touching it; or, if he had an evil spirit, the poor creature was delivered from it. Just as people who had fevers and plagues give their diseases to others, if healthy people touch clothes they have touched; so the body of this apostle could

give health to the sick and afflicted, by clothes he had touched being sent to them. It was Christ's promise that his apostles could do greater works than he had done.

At last Paul had the comfort and delight of seeing Apollos. He had heard much of him, and now he saw that eloquent man and blessed preacher. Apollos came to Ephesus while Paul was still there. He had just come from Corinth, the capital of Greece. He had a great deal to tell Paul about the Corinthians—some good, but more evil.

Paul was made so uneasy by hearing of their sins, that he went over the sea that he might reprove the offenders.

Wicked People at Corinth.

He stayed at Corinth a very short time, and was much grieved to find that Apollos' account was only too true. There were many there very fond of Apollos, who said, I am of Apollos; many others said, I am of Paul; yet they did not follow what Apollos taught or what Paul taught.

Paul soon returned to Ephesus. He thought it would be best to send some good men to Corinth, that they might bring the Corinthians to repentance. He fixed upon Timothy as one messenger, and on Erastus as another, a man born in Corinth. He told them to go round by Macedonia, and to collect money for the poor saints in Jerusalem as they passed through Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea.

While the messengers were absent Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians. He wrote it with many tears, flowing from the anguish of his heart. This pain was worse to him than all the labor of his hands to earn bread.

When he had finished his very long letter he sent it by Titus, who was a native of Corinth. Titus was afraid lest he should be ill-received by the sinful Christians at Corinth. But Titus obeyed Paul's wishes, and went with a companion to Corinth. He took Trophimus as his companion.

When Titus arrived at Corinth he was received most affectionately. The Corinthians were quite penitent, and ready to obey Titus in everything. Paul's letter was read to them, and it made a great impression; for the Corinthians attended more to what Paul wrote than to what he spoke, for he was not a fine speaker, nor was he grand-looking.

Titus did not soon come back to Ephesus. Paul continued to feel great anxiety about the Corinthians, and kept longing for Titus' return.

As Athens was famous for learning, as Corinth was famous for games, so Ephesus was for sorcery. The city of Ephesus was full of deceivers. The devil had great power in Ephesus, and enabled people to deceive others by their pretended wonders.

These deceivers were called sorcerers, or conjurers, or wizzards, or magicians, or charmers, or exorcists. These names all mean nearly the same thing.

One Against Seven.

When these sorcerers heard of Paul's miracles, they tried to do miracles of their own. There was one old man named Sceva. He was a Jew, and he was a chief priest. He had seven sons, and he ought to have brought them all up to serve the God of Israel.

But these seven sons served the devil. They wanted to do the same miracles that Paul did, without believing in Jesus.

There was a man who had a very fierce, evil spirit. The seven brothers went to his house to cast out the evil spirit. They stood over him, and said, I command thee by Jesus whom Paul preaches to come out of him. The evil spirit, instead of coming out of the

man, made this terrible answer, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?

Having said this, the man jumped up suddenly, seized hold of the brothers, struggled with them all seven, tore their clothes and bruised their bodies, and conquered them all; so that the frightened brothers ran from the house with hardly any clothes, and many bleeding wounds.

This overthrow of the sorcerers was much talked of by the people of Ephesus; and it made many praise the Lord Jesus by whom Paul did such real wonders.

There were many other sorcerers in Ephesus, who came to Paul and confessed the wicked tricks they had played through Satan; and they brought their books about their charms and burned them in the streets before all the people. They would not sell the books because they were wicked books. They might have got fifty thousand pieces of silver for them if they had sold them, but they loved Jesus more than silver.

Many more people believed in Jesus when they saw the burning of the books.

A Magnificent Temple.

In the city of Ephesus there was an immense and beautiful temple, the finest idol temple in the world. It was built of white marble, and it was surrounded by green marble pillars. But to whose honor was it built?

To the honor of an ugly idol called Diana. There were many beautiful statues called Diana; but this idol was a mere block of wood, with something like a head at the top, and short arms at the sides, leaning on two iron sticks to keep it from falling. This block was adorned with a splendid crown and girdle, and carefully preserved behind a rich curtain, in a kind of little temple in the midst of the great temple. The priests who waited on the idol taught the people that it came down from heaven.

People came from all countries to worship Diana and to join in her riotious feasts, and they used to carry little shrines to their children at home as a remembrance of her These shrines were made of silver, and were like little temples with the idol inside.

There was a man named Demetrius; he had grown rich by making these silver shrines. He found that people did not buy so many as they used. He knew that Paul had turned multitudes from the worship of idols. This made him very angry, for he felt that he should not get much money by his shrines.

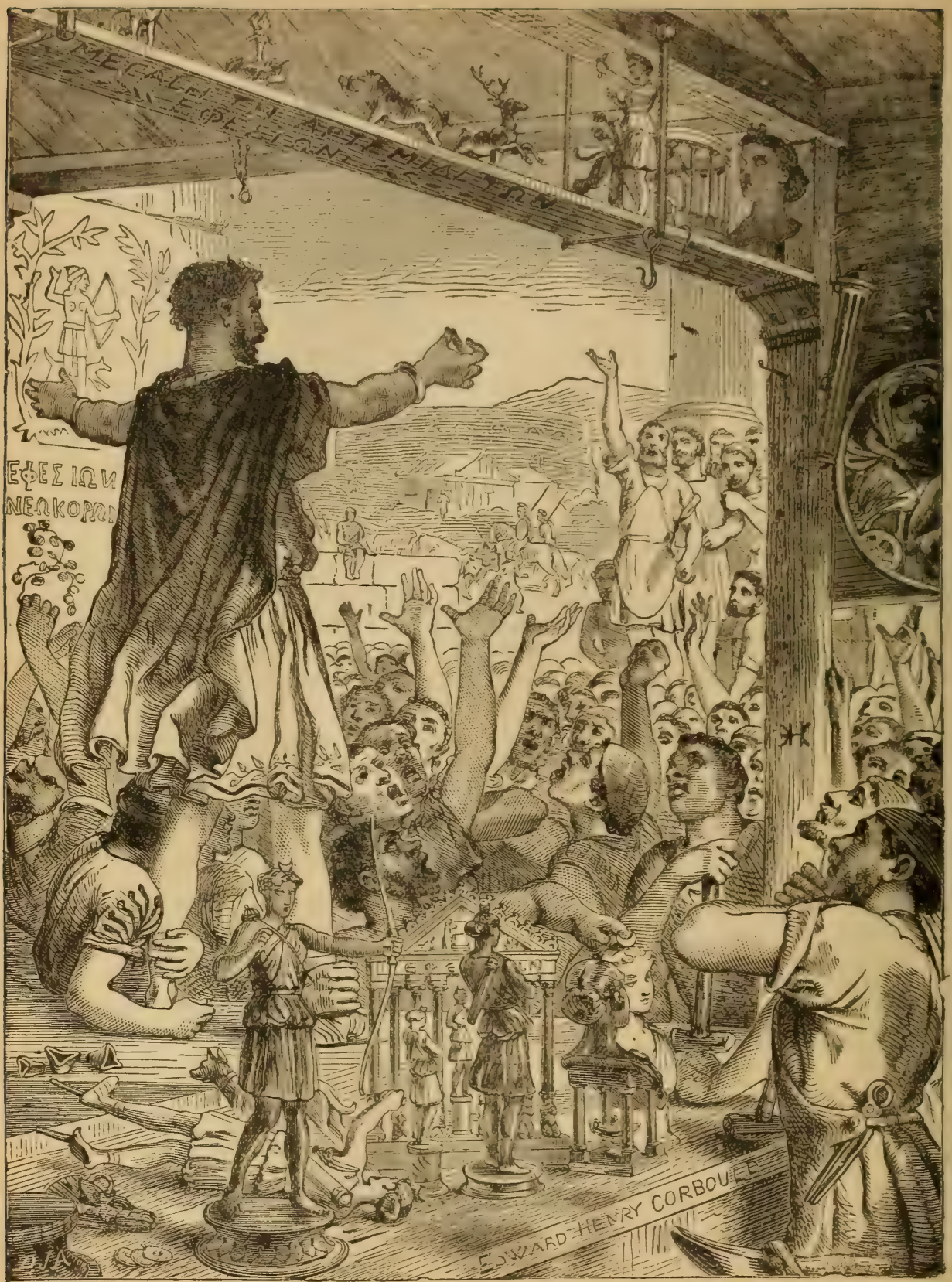
The Uproar at Ephesus.

He wished to stop Paul from preaching. The way he took was to call together all the silversmiths in the place and to make them a speech. In his speech he told them that Paul was turning every one away from their great goddess Diana, and that soon they would have no more shrines to make.

The silversmiths were so much enraged that they began to cry out with all their might, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

The people in the city heard the cry, and seized two of Paul's companions, called Gaius and Aristarchus. The people then dragged them into a large place called a theatre. Paul heard the uproar, and wanted to go into the theatre after his companions, but the Christians in Ephesus would not let him go in, lest he should be torn to pieces.

It was one of the amusements in this theatre to see wild beasts tear each other to pieces. Who could say what those fierce men might do to Paul? For two hours the people continued to cry out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! At last a chief man of the city rose up and spoke.



518 DEMETRIUS RAISING AN UPROAR AT EPHESUS AGAINST PAUL.

The riotous bawlers stopped when they saw him. He spoke to them very wisely, and advised them to be quiet, and to go home.

What a comfort it was when this uproar ceased! Those two friends, Gaius and Aristarchus, who had been dragged into the theatre, had not been torn to pieces by the furious mob! This was God's deliverance of his own servants from men more cruel than wild beasts.

I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, said Paul to the Christians at Corinth.

Paul Takes His Departure.

After the uproar was over at Ephesus, Paul prepared to leave the place, for it was dangerous to remain. He called all the believers together, and took leave of them with much affection. He had been much shaken by the uproar, and had almost died from fear and trembling.

Then he set out with his own campanions. Their names are not mentioned in the Scriptures. Timothy was not one of them, for he was gone on before to the very country where Paul was now going. What was that country? The country to which the man in the dream had called him long ago —Macedonia.

On the way to Macedonia, Paul went to Troas, hoping there to meet Titus. Day after day he waited there, but he was cast down by Titus not arriving. Why was he so anxious? He wanted to know whether the Corinthians had minded the letter he had sent by Titus. He feared lest they were going on in their sinful ways.

Weary of waiting for Titus at Troas, Paul set out for Macedonia, hoping to meet him there. He went to that city of Macedonia where he had first preached the Gospel—Philippi. There he saw friends who had often sent him presents in his distress. Lydia may have been one of those friends, and the jailer another.

But he did not find Titus there. At last the much-longed-for one came. After Paul had been waiting some time, Titus arrived with most joyful news. The Corinthians had repented. So Paul wrote them a comforting letter, and sent it by the hands of Titus. That young minister's heart now burned with affection for the Corinthians, and he gladly went back to Corinth with Paul's letter of forgiveness.

Paul now travelled about Greece, and to other countries beyond, still collecting for the saints at Jerusalem. He was accompanied by many brethren. At length he determined to visit Jerusalem, and he set sail, with many companions, and landed at Troas, on the way to Jerusalem.

There were eight brethren now assembled with Paul at Troas (among them were Luke and Timothy). Paul spent a week at Troas.

The last day of his stay was the Sabbath.

On that evening all the Christians met together in an upper chamber on the third floor. There were many lights in it. A young man, named Eutychus, sat near a large window that was open. Paul preached a great while, even till midnight, and the young man fell asleep. In his sleep he fell out of the window.

The Young Man is Alive.

The little congregation saw him fall, and they rushed down the stairs outside, going through the window. Paul stopped preaching, and went down also. All the Christians were much grieved to find the youth lying dead upon the ground.

But Paul stretched himself over the body, and held it in his arms, and said to the weeping friends, Do not be grieved, for his life

is in him. The young man was indeed alive, and his friends were comforted. They all went up again with Paul.

It was now past midnight. During the dark hours of the morning the happy Christians broke bread, in remembrance of their crucified Lord; and they talked about him a long while. When the beams of the rising sun shone upon them, Paul and his eight companions took leave of the fellow-Christians, and left Troas. The eight companions went down to the ship and set sail, but Paul preferred walking alone.

Paul's companions got into a ship, while Paul himself walked across the land about twenty miles. The way was through groves of oak-trees, which shaded the apostle from the sun, while the little birds on this spring day filled the air with their warblings.

He Sails Away in a Ship.

Why did Paul wish to go this day's journey all alone? How gladly would Luke, or Timothy, or any of the brethren, have walked with him! No doubt he wished to speak as he went along to his Father in heaven. Had not his God that very night enabled him to revive the dead?

He found the ship at the place he had fixed upon. The place was Assos. He got into the ship, and he sailed away in it.

As the ship did not belong to Paul he could not make it stop where he pleased. Though he would have liked to have the ship stop at Ephesus, yet for some reasons he was glad that it sailed past the great city, and stopped at Miletus.

When Paul heard that the ship would stay some time at that place, he sent a message to Ephesus to ask the elders of the church to come and see him. The messengers had thirty miles to go. But these Ephesians loved Paul so much that they quickly came to him. They saw again their beloved apostle, and they saw also two of their own countrymen who had travelled with him by sea and land, named Tychicus and Trophimus. Paul spoke to them in a most affectionate manner. He told them he was going to Jerusalem, and that he knew he should be put in prison. But, said he, I am ready to give up my life for Jesus. Then he said, I know that you shall see my face no more.

A Sad Farewell.

He reminded them how he had taught them night and day for three years, and how with his own hands he had earned his bread. Then he kneeled down and prayed with them all. They all wept very bitterly, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him. What grieved them most was Paul's saying that they should see his face no more. Their love to him was very great. They would not leave him, till they saw him get into the ship and sail away. They had a long journey home, and they must have shed many tears by the way.

Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, was one of the sayings of this remarkable man.

Paul went sailing on, first in one ship and then in another, till he came to the city of Tyre. That city is just above the land of Canaan, and from it a poor woman once came to ask mercy of the Lord Jesus when on earth.

The ship stopped here to unload, for it was filled with good things for the people of Tyre to buy. We do not know for certain what they were; very likely sacks of wheat and barrels of wine, from the fruitful fields of Asia.

Paul and his companions landed, and spent

seven days with the Christians of Tyre. That woman who had so much faith in Jesus must often have talked of her beloved Lord, but perhaps she was dead now.

Among the Christians of Tyre there were some prophets, and they told Paul that if he went up to Jerusalem he would have much sorrow; but Paul would go, for he was ready to suffer for Jesus' sake.

When the week was over, Paul and his companions walked towards the seashore. The Christians of Tyre walked with them, and even their children. When they were out of the city they all kneeled down on the seashore and prayed. Would the children ever forget seeing Paul go away? There was an affectionate parting by the side of the ship. The Christians from Tyre went home.

Soon the ship came to the end of its voyage, just at the foot of Mount Carmel—that mount where long ago Elijah had prayed for fire to consume the sacrifice.

A Good Old Man.

The ship went no farther. Paul and his companions continued their journey on foot along the seacoast. They went thirty-five miles, and then came to the fine city of Cæsarea. At this place once lived Cornelius, the Roman centurion—the first Gentile who received the Holy Ghost from heaven. That was more than twenty years ago. Probably he was not there, for soldiers do not remain long in one place.

But one old man was there whom Paul had seen. Yes! he had seen him once in Jerusalem, when Stephen was stoned. This old man was Philip the deacon. He was one of the seven deacons, Stephen was another. This deacon had once been sent to talk to the rich Ethiopian in his chariot some twenty years ago.

Philip was still at Cæsarea. He was living there with his four daughters. They were all prophetesses. It was indeed a holy family—such a father and such daughters!

Paul liked to stay in the house of this good man. His companions stayed there too. Some of them may have left him, but of this we are sure, Luke was with him, and the two Ephesians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

The Apostle's Girdle.

There came one day to Philip's house a prophet named Agabus. He took off Paul's long girdle and bound his own hands and feet with it. What could he mean by this? Paul must have wondered. He said, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that weareth this girdle; and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles.

When Paul's friends heard these words they began to entreat him not to go to Jerusalem. Luke and Philip and all the rest joined in the entreaty, while they shed many tears. Paul answered, Why do you weep and break my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but to die in Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus.

When his friends could not persuade him they left off begging him saying, The will of the Lord be done. Then Paul and his companions went on, walking to Jerusalem.

Paul left Cæsarea with more companions than he brought with him. Christians loved Paul, and liked to be with him. They wanted also to keep the Feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem.

The distance was seventy-five miles, which must have taken them three or four days to travel. They had to pack up their luggage to send by some way to Jerusalem. They had also much money to take to the poor saints in that city. Their journey must have been tiresome, for it was now summer, and the climate was hot.

When they arrived at Jerusalem they went to the house of a very good old man, who had long believed in Jesus. Mnason was living at that time somewhere in Jerusalem, and the disciples led Paul and Luke, and their companions, to the house of this good old man.

The brethren in Jerusalem were very glad to see this famous apostle Paul. Luke, also, they must have been glad to see, for he had already written his precious history of Jesus. We do not know how many apostles there were now at Jerusalem. One there certainly was, James. He was the ruler of the Christians in Jerusalem.

Paul knew they wished to hear about his travels, and he related how God had turned the hearts of many Gentiles from idols to Jesus.

The brethren were all delighted to hear this account; and they praised God for his wonderful works. Paul gave them also the money for the poor saints—the gift of the Gentiles. This was a joyful beginning. But soon all that the Holy Spirit had said by the prophets came true.

A Thrilling Address.

The day after Paul's arrival a great meeting was held in Jerusalem. The apostle James was chief over the assembly; many elders were there. Christians brought large sums of money, collected in distant countries, for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

When they had presented these gifts, Paul began to address the assembly. He told them the history of his travels, and of the conversions the Lord had wrought among the Gentiles. What praises flowed from the lips of the believers, when Paul had finished his speech!

Then some elders arose and began to give the apostle their advice. What, did they think that Paul needed their advice? Yes, they did. They had met with Jews who bore false witness of Paul, and who said he set the people against the law of Moses. Was this true?

Then they gave this advice: Brother, show that you honor the law of Moses by doing what we desire. We have here four men who have made a vow, probably the vow of the Nazarite; see that they shave their heads, and let them purify themselves with you, and do you pay the expenses. Thus you will show thousands of Jews that you keep the law, and teach the Jews to keep it.

Uproar in the Temple.

Paul followed this advice. He took the men into the temple, for they were Jews. Did this satisfy the fierce Jews? No, it only made Paul's accusers more violent.

The men were purified during seven days. When the seven days were almost over some Jews from Asia (probably from the city of Ephesus), seeing Paul in the temple, stirred up the people against him, and seized him, saying, This Paul is the man who goes about speaking against the temple; and he has now taken Gentiles into the temple.

Paul had never done this. These wicked Jews had seen him walking in the streets with Trophimus the Ephesian; but Paul had never taken him into the temple.

But most people believed what the Jews from Asia said; and they all ran together into the temple. They found Paul in the court of Israel, near the altar, where he had a right to be. They seized hold of him, and dragged him out of the court, down the steps. The Levites shut the great brass doors behind him. His enemies hurried him into the streets, and would soon have stoned him—as they had stoned Stephen more than

twenty years before—had they not been suddenly stopped in their wickedness.

There was a great tower just above the temple, where a thousand Roman soldiers lodged. The captain heard that there was an uproar in the city, and he ran down in haste, with many soldiers, to the place where Paul was. He found the Jews beating him, but when these men saw the captain they left off beating Paul; for they knew they had no right to do so.

The chief captain came near, and ordered his soldiers to bind Paul between two, with two chains, as Peter had once been bound.

Now the prophicies about Paul began to come true. Here is Paul in chains. Will he not soon be in prison? May he not soon be led forth to die? This was one reason why he said, The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

When the captain had bound Paul, he inquired what he had done to make the people so angry with him.

The people gave so many answers to this question that the captain did not know what to believe. Some cried out one thing and some another, and there was such confusion that the captain ordered the soldiers to take him into the tower or castle.

PAUL BOUND WITH CHAINS.

The soldiers led him along till they came to the stairs up to the castle. As they went up those stairs the people pushed the soldiers so much that Paul was lifted off his feet and carried up the stairs in the soldiers' arms. All the time the people, who were pressing up the stairs kept on crying out, Away with him! These people were ferocious as hounds ready to seize upon a harmless deer.

Allowed to Speak.

The captain had gone up the stairs first, for as Paul was on his way he saw the captain, and respectfully said to him, May I speak unto the people?

The captain wanted to know who he was, Paul answered, I am a Jew of Tarsus, and I beseech thee suffer me to speak unto the people. There was something so pleasant and honest in Paul's manner, that the captain gave leave for his prisoner to speak.

Then Paul stood on the stairs, rather near the top, and made a sign to the people below that he was going to speak. The fierce multitude wanted to hear him speak, wondering what he would say; and so they suddenly became quite silent.

Then Paul spoke. He told the multitude his history—how he once cruelly treated the Christians—and how he saw a light from heaven, and heard Jesus speak—and how he was made blind—and how Ananais restored his sight—and how he preached about Jesus in Jerusalem, till God said, Depart I will send thee far away to the Gentiles.

As soon as Paul had uttered these words, there arose such cries and shouts from the people beneath as you never heard. Amid their yells they screamed, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live! As they cried out, they took off their upper garments to prepare for stoning him, and they threw dust in the air, in their rage.

The captain began to think that Paul must have committed some very dreadful crime to make the Jews so angry with him. So he ordered a centurion to take him into the castle, and to have him scourged till he would confess what he had done. What a horrible command this was! For what crime could Paul confess? He might have died under the scourge before he could confess. But Paul remembered that he was a Roman; that is, he had the privileges of a Roman citizen, though he was a Jew.

That privilege was, not to be punished without being tried first and found guilty. What was thought so great a privilege in those countries, is now enjoyed by every American. No one can be punished unless found guilty.

The Captain Frightened.

The soldiers were binding Paul with straps of leather to the whipping-post before they beat him with rods, and the centurion was standing near, when Paul said to the centurion, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and who has not been condemned?

When the centurion heard this, he told the soldiers not to go on with their work, and he went to the captain and said, You must take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.

Then the captain was quite frightened at having bound him with straps or thongs, and he went quickly to Paul, and said, Tell me, art thou a Roman? Paul said, Yes. The captain said, I paid a great deal of money to be made a Roman.

But I, said Paul, was free-born. He meant that his father had the privilege, and so he, his son, inherited it from him. The captain then sent away the soldiers, and made them put away their straps and their rods.

PAUL CONVEYED INTO THE CASTLE. 525

But he thought it best to let Paul sleep in the castle that night, for had he sent him back the Jews might have torn him in pieces. So Paul slept that night in the castle; but he was not treated as a common prisoner, because he was a Roman. Yet he still wore his chains, for even a Roman might wear chains.

Now Paul knew that his enemies would not be able to kill him, and that he would go to the great city Rome, the grandest city in all the world, where Cæsar, the emperor of the world, reigned.

Paul had long wished to go to Rome, that he might speak for Jesus there and turn many to the Lord. But he did not yet know how he was to get there.

Visit from Paul's Nephew.

The next morning a young man went up the stairs leading to the castle. The place was well guarded by soldiers. The young man asked the centurion at the door whether he might see Paul. The centurion gave him leave.

Who was this young man? Was it Timothy? No; it was none of Paul's fellow-travellers, but it was a young man who loved him, and a young man well known at Jerusalem as a gentleman and a Christian.

When this young man entered Paul's prison-room, he said, Uncle, I have something very important to tell you. You see this young man was Paul's nephew. He was his sister's son, but we do not know his name.

Paul wanted to know what he had to tell him so important. It is a dreadful plan that has been made by forty Jews to kill you, my uncle. These forty have made a vow, or promise, that they will not eat or drink till they have killed you. But how can they get at you? They have been to the chief priests, and have begged them to ask the captain to bring you to the council to be judged by the Sanhedrim. Then they intend to hide themselves on the way, and suddenly to burst forth from their hiding-place and to kill you on the spot.

The Young Man Tells His Story.

Paul thought that he ought to try to prevent this wickedness, though he well knew he should not be killed, for God had told him he should see Rome. He called a centurion who was close by, and said to him, Will you take this young man to the captain? For he has something to tell him.

So the centurion brought him to the captain. The captain took the young man by the hand and led him into a room where he could be alone with him. Now, said he, what have you to tell me?

The young man told him all. He ended by saying, When the chief priests send to ask you to let Paul come down to the council, do not consent. The captain answered, You may now go. Do not mention to any one that you have told what the Jews intend to do.

The young man readily promised this; for if the Jews had known that he had told the captain, they would surely have torn the nephew in pieces instead of his uncle. This nephew had acted faithfully to his uncle and had saved his life.

THE SOLITARY PLACES MADE GLAD.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PAUL SENT BY NIGHT TO CÆSAREA—THE ROMAN GOVERNOR FELIX—WICKED DRUSILLA—A NEW GOVERNOR—PAUL BEFORE KING AGRIPPA—A POINTED SERMON—TWO YEARS IN PRISON—PLOT TO TAKE THE LIFE OF PAUL—THE VOYAGE TO ROME—FURIOUS STORM—THE SHIP WRECKED—ESCAPE OF ALL ON BOARD—A DEADLY VIPER—ASTONISHMENT OF THE HEATHEN—MIRACLES OF HEALING—PAUL'S ARRIVAL AT ROME—A NOBLE MARTYR—THE APOSTLE JOHN—WONDERFUL VISIONS.

YEARS before this, Paul had persecuted Christians; now he is persecuted in like manner, yet his friends do not forsake him. The captain had a great deal to do before evening. His plan for saving Paul's life was to send him away secretly to another city. There was a city called Cæsarea, seventy miles from Jerusalem. At that time the Roman governor was living there. The captain thought of sending Paul to be judged by that Roman governor; for that was a privilege that Paul enjoyed as a Roman citizen.

But if the Jews knew that Paul was going to leave the city they would waylay him. Therefore the captain meant to send Paul by night, and to have him well guarded by soldiers.

The captain called two centurions and said to them secretly, Get ready immediately two hundred soldiers. Each centurion had a hundred under his command. But that will not be enough, thought the captain. Get ready besides seventy horsemen and two hundred men, with spears and pikes. Be ready at nine o'clock, said the captain. Take care that there are horses for Paul to ride on, and take him safe to the governor Felix at Cæsarea.

Having given these orders the captain sat down to write a letter to the governor. He began his letter thus: Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

He went on to say that Paul had done nothing deserving of death, or even of imprisonment, but that the Jews had accused him of disobeying their law. He ended his letter nearly in these words: When it was told me that the Jews meant to lie in wait for the man, I sent him to thee; and I commanded the Jews to go down to tell thee what he had done. Farewell.

This letter the captain gave to the centurions to take to the governor.

Chained to a Man on Each Side.

At nine o'clock that evening, when it was dark, Paul mounted a horse, and a man chained to him rode on each side of him. Thus Paul left Jerusalem, accompanied by four hundred and seventy soldiers. This was a little army, and this army was to guard one weak man. But that weak man had so many enemies that it was necessary to guard him well.

Softly and silently the little army departed from Jerusalem, and took the road to Cæsarea. During that night they went forty miles, and then they came to a town that lay on the way, where to rest. After resting during

the day the four hundred foot-soldiers returned to Jerusalem, leaving only the seventy horsemen to guard Paul.

The next day Paul set out again on horseback, and in due time arrived at Cæsarea, by the seacoast. He was taken by a centurion to the governor's palace — a magnificent palace, built of white marble.

Governor Felix.

Paul was led into the grand room, where the governor, Felix, was sitting. This Felix was indeed a wicked old man. He was once a slave, but had been set free and made great. Why? Because he was ready to do any wicked thing that great men asked him to do. This old man was clothed in purple, and seated on a throne. Before him stood the holy prisoner, with chains on his hands.

The centurion presented the captain's letter to Felix. When the governor had read it, he asked where Paul came from. When he was told it was from Tarsus in Cilicia he looked towards Paul, and said, I will hear thee when thine accusers come down.

Then he commanded him to be kept in the judgment-hall. He did not put him in a prison, but in a fine room close to the palace. In that room Paul slept that night.

Paul was again in Cæsarea. He had stayed there a little while ago in the house of Philip the deacon, with his four holy daughters; and he had seen Agabus the prophet. Did Paul now remember how Agabus had tied the girdle round his hands and feet, and shown that Paul would be chained in the same manner? Oh yes! Paul remembered it well; for it was only ten days ago, since Agabus had done this.

Now Paul found himself with the real chains around his wrists and his ankles. But though he was in chains, he was in a pleasant prison—for it was a fine, handsome, airy room—and kept cool by the sea-breezes. He waited there three days before his enemies arrived. In the text five days are mentioned, but they are counted from Paul's leaving Jerusalem, not from his arriving at Cæsarea.

Ananias, the high priest, came, and the elders of the Sanhedrim. There must have been a grand train of horses and servants, when such honorable men travelled.

One morning Paul in his chains was called to appear before Felix, to be judged. A whole host of enemies was assembled in the place. How full of malice they felt when they saw the poor prisoner, who had escaped out of their hands a few days before!

They had brought with them a man who could speak well; he was called an orator, or speaker. His name was Tertullus. The Jews promised to pay him well for making a fine speech against Paul.

Tertullus began his speech by praising Felix. He continued it by abusing Paul. He pretended that Paul had gone about the world trying to make the Jews rebel; and that he had come to Jerusalem to profane the temple.

Felix Afraid of the Jews.

When Tertullus had finished his speech, Felix made a sign for Paul to speak. The prisoner declared that he had done nothing wrong, and that no one could prove anything against him, except this one thing, that he had said: There will be a resurrection of the dead!

When Felix had heard Paul's answer, he did not know what to say. He thought that Paul was innocent. Why, then, did he not let him go? For the same reason that Pontius Pilate would not let Jesus go. He feared to displease the Jews. Still he was afraid to condemn a Roman citizen such as Paul. So he said to the Jews, I will wait till

I know more of this matter; perhaps the captain may come down and tell me more.

The Jews were very much disappointed by this answer; for they wanted to get Paul down to Jerusalem. But they were obliged to go home without him.

Felix liked Paul better than before, since he had heard his speech. He directed a centurion to take care of him, and to be kind to him, and to make him comfortable. He told him that Paul might be allowed to see his friends, and to have them stay with him.

Allowed to See His Friends.

This was a great delight to Paul. His friends were very dear to him. He might see Philip, who lived in Cæsarea. His daughters might come and bring him any food or clothes that he might want. His friends at Jerusalem could easily come down and see him. Seventy miles are not a very long journey. Perhaps the apostle James came down—perhaps Peter—perhaps John.

It is certain that Luke was often with Paul. Some think that he wrote his history of Jesus while sitting by Paul's side. Timothy was sure to come; he was like a son to Paul, and was his greatest earthly comfort. There were many more who loved to be with the apostle. Would not Silas come and sing psalms with him, as he once did in a worse prison, a long while ago?

Very likely Paul was thinking of the chains he wore at this time when he wrote to the Hebrews, saying, Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Day after day passed away, and Paul continued in his pleasant prison. Sometimes Felix went away for a while. Once he returned, bringing with him a beautiful young lady, whom he had just married. Her name was Drusilla. She was a Jewess. She was a daughter of that Herod who put Peter in prison, and who was eaten by worms.

Yet, though a Jewess, she had just married a heathen, and she had committed many crimes; for though so young, she had been married before, and she had left her husband to be the wife of Felix. The husband she had left was a king.

It is reported that Simon Magus, whom Peter rebuked, had managed by his arts to set her against her right husband, and to turn her to like Felix.

When Felix brought Drusilla to Cæsarea, he told her of the wonderful prisoner he was keeping there. He told her how well Paul spoke about Jesus Christ, and his power to save those who believed in him. Felix thought that Drusilla would like to see this Jew, as she was a Jewess. So he told the centurion to bring Paul out of prison into his room.

Paul was glad to speak of his Saviour to very great sinners. He knew that he stood before a wicked Gentile governor, and a false, faithless Jewess. He spoke not only of Jesus as the Saviour, but also of Jesus as the Judge. He declared how terrible it would be for a sinner to stand before that Judge at the last day.

What Felix Did.

While the prisoner spoke of his heavenly Judge, his earthly judge was seen to tremble. This was a good sign. It might be that he would not only tremble, but fall down and implore mercy, as Paul himself had once done. Oh, how he had trembled when he had said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

But this aged sinner, Felix, when he trembled, commanded the preacher to depart. Go thy way for this time. When I

have a convenient season I will call for thee. Paul was obliged to leave him, though he would gladly have stayed to persuade him to repent, and join the band of Christians.

Felix often sent for Paul again and talked to him, but I do not hear that he ever trembled again. His heart was set upon getting money, and so he sent often for Paul, in

THE STRONG SUPPORTING THE WEAK.

hopes that Paul would offer him money to set him free. But Paul would not offer a bribe to a judge, even if he had the money, for it is wicked to offer bribes.

No doubt Paul's friends would have given him the money, if he had asked for it.

A New Governor.

Felix went on in his covetousness for two years, and then another governor was sent by Cæsar at Rome to take his place.

Felix might have released Paul before he went away, but he thought it would please the Jews more if he left Paul in prison, and so he did. Thus he went on adding sin to sin, getting more and more hardened. We do not know he perished in this world, but we know that his wife Drusilla, with her son, perished in an earthquake. When Felix went away, a new governor came in his place. His name was Festus. He stayed only three days at Cæsarea on his way to Jerusalem. During that short time he did not see Paul. But when he came to Jerusalem he heard a great deal about him. The chief priests and his friends came to Festus, and told him about a very bad man who lay in prison at Cæsarea.

Oh, he has done so much harm! they said. When he was free, he went from place to place, setting people against Cæsar; he wants us all to rebel, and only to mind the laws of a man who once was crucified, Jesus of Nazareth, who, he says, is the true King. What do you want me to do, said Festus.

We want you to send soldiers to fetch this wicked man, that you may judge him at Jerusalem. Do grant us this great favor, we entreat you—do let him come to Jerusalem.

What made them so very anxious that Paul should come down to Jerusalem? They wanted to hide themselves in the road, and to burst forth upon him and kill him.

Those forty Jews, who lately made the same kind of plan, were among his accusers now, with Ananias at their head. Festus did not know the real motive of the Jews in wanting Paul to come to Jerusalem, but he did not grant their request, for he saw no use in bringing Paul back to Jerusalem.

Festus answered: I am going down to Cæsarea very soon, and when I go you can come with me, and you can accuse him before the judgment-seat there, of all the wicked things you say he has done. The Jews were much disappointed at this answer, but they were obliged to submit.

Festus stayed ten days at Jerusalem, and then he returned to Cæsarea. There went with him the chief priest, and a troop of Paul's enemies. The next day Festus sat on his judgment-seat in the palace, and the prisoner was brought forth to stand before him.

Would Not Go to Jerusalem.

That prisoner saw once more his deadly enemies, who were panting for his blood. They had brought no great speaker with them this time, but they stood round about, pouring out of their spiteful lips, loud and bitter complaints against Paul.

When Paul was allowed to speak, he said plainly, I have done nothing at all against any of them, nor against Cæsar. All I have done is to declare that Jesus, whom they crucified, is risen again from the dead.

Festus saw that Paul had done nothing really wicked; but he was anxious to please the Jews, so he said to Paul, Will you go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged before me? This was just what the Jews wanted. They must have been pleased when they heard Festus say this.

No, said Paul: I will be judged before Cæsar.

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS AT ROME READING PAUL'S LETTER.

Paul was wise to refuse to go to Jerusalem. He chose to go to Rome instead, and God had told him (as you know) in a dream that he should go to Rome.

Festus could not refuse Paul's request, and he replied, As you wish to go to Cæsar, to Cæsar you shall go.

Ordered Back to Prison.

Then Festus ordered the centurion to take Paul back to his prison, and to keep him there, till he could send him in a ship to Rome. Paul had long been anxious to visit the great city that ruled the world. We do not know exactly how the Gospel reached Rome, but there were Christians there even before Paul was blinded by the bright light near Damascus.

Perhaps some of those persons who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost were from Rome, and returned with the wonderful story of Christ. Perhaps some of the disciples who were scattered abroad after the martyrdom of Stephen went there, at any rate there were Christians in Rome, and Paul had written them a letter and had sent it by Phebe who belonged to the church at Cenchrea.

The Jews went back to Jerusalem from Cæsarea more disappointed than ever. They had lost their prey, they would never be able to stone him or to crucify him. He was to be taken far away. Paul remained in prison while Festus, the governor, waited for a ship to carry the prisoner to Rome. While Festus waited, a king came to see him. It was the son of that Herod who was eaten with worms. His name was Herod Agrippa, but he is generally called Agrippa only.

He was a very great man—greater than Festus, for he was a king who could do what he would, while Festus was only a governor under Cæsar.

Agrippa brought with him his sister, Bernice. Do you remember he had another sister, called Drusilla? But she was gone away with Felix. The whole family were very wicked. As Agrippa was a Jew, he knew more about the Jew's religion than Festus, who was a Roman. Agrippa paid a very long visit to Festus.

One day Festus said to him, I should like you to see a man I have here in prison named Paul. The Jews hate him very much, and yet I cannot find out that he has done anything wrong. They chiefly quarrel with him about one Jesus, who, the Jews say, is dead, and who Paul says is alive. I would have taken him to Jerusalem to be judged, but he wishes to go to Rome, to be judged by Cæsar.

Agrippa said he would like to hear the man speak. To-morrow, said Festus, you shall hear him. The next day King Agrippa came into the great court, accompanied by the princess Bernice, dressed in a very grand manner. All the chief men came also.

Then Festus commanded that Paul should be brought forth. He came with his chains on his hands, a poor prisoner, mean and low in his appearance, but with Christ in his heart.

Before King Agrippa.

There were no accusers this time to speak first, so Agrippa commanded Paul to begin.

The prisoner stretched forth his chained hand, and spoke respectfully, saying, King Agrippa. Then he told his history to the king, declaring how he had seen Jesus, as a light brighter than the sun, and how he had heard his voice. Therefore, said he, I tell every one that Jesus died and rose again.

When Festus heard him speak of rising from the dead, he cried out in a loud voice that Paul was mad. Paul replied, I am not

mad, most noble Festus! but speak forth the words of truth; and the king has heard about these things.

Then Agrippa said, You almost persuade me to be a Christian.

Paul gave him the most beautiful, loving answer, I would that you were not only almost but altogether such as I am, except these chains. These were the chains upon his hands.

Then the king and the great people rose from their seats, and went into another room. They said to one another, This man has done nothing to deserve death, or even chains.

Paul Sets Sail for Rome.

Agrippa said to Festus, If he had not asked to be judged by Cæsar, he might have been set free.

But was Agrippa ever quite persuaded to be a Christian? No, never. He heard the truth, but he did not follow it at the moment he heard it. He was not like the jailer at Philippi, who said, What must I do to be saved? and who believed that moment and was saved.

At last a ship came to Cæsarea in which Paul could sail towards Rome. The ship was only going part of the way, but another ship might be found for the rest of the voyage.

Paul was given into the charge of a centurion named Julius. Was Paul to sail with none but strangers? Oh no; he had two loving friends to accompany him, two friends who had travelled with him before, and who had probably been much with him in his prison. These were Aristarchus, a man of Macedonia, and Luke, the writer of Paul's history. What a comfort for Paul to have such friends, especially Luke!

The people who sailed in the ship were the captain and his sailors, who worked the ship; the centurion and his soldiers, who guarded the prisoners; Paul and his two friends. Besides Paul there were other prisoners, who may have committed great crimes. The prisoners were all to be judged at Rome.

The ship sailed along the coast of Cæsarea till it came to Sidon, just above Cæsarea. Here the ship stopped. Paul had Christian friends in Sidon. He longed much to see them and to bid them farewell.

Julius, the centurion, was very kind to Paul, and he readily allowed him to go on shore and see his friends and to get any comforts for the voyage that he needed. His friends would be sure to remember to give him some good food to take with him.

A cheering walk it was for Paul to go with Luke and Aristarchus to see those friends; it was so long since he had paid a visit to any one; but there went with him a soldier, fastened to him by a chain, to see that he did not escape. The way was among hills covered with fig-trees, orange-trees, and vineyards. Paul returned to the ship and set sail again.

After going a long while by the shore of Asia, the ship met another that was going to Rome. The centurion made all on board get into the other ship.

Danger Ahead.

And now the ship sailed very slowly for many days, for the wind was against it. The ship sailed south of the great island of Crete, and took shelter in a large harbor there, where it was sheltered from the high wind. This harbor was called The Fair Havens.

The summer was now ended, and it had become rather dangerous to sail. The chief men on board consulted together about the voyage. Shall we stay here, or go on?

This is a good haven where we are, said one; shall we pass the winter here?

Oh no, said another; there is a much better haven a little farther on.

Let us start and try to reach it, said another. Then Paul, though a prisoner, gave his advice. He said, Sirs, I perceive that in this voyage there will be danger to the goods in the ship, and to the ship itself, and to our lives.

But the centurion would not follow his advice, for he thought that the captain and the owner of the ship knew better than Paul. Most of the sailors and soldiers on board wished to go on. Surely we can go forty miles more to the good port, said they.

Ah, they knew not that Paul was a prophet, and that he would not have given his advice except by the will of God.

A Storm Comes On.

Just at this time the wind blew very softly. The crew set sail, aud they went along so pleasantly that they must have been glad that they did not follow Paul's advice. In a few hours they hoped to reach the well-sheltered haven at the farther end of the island of Crete.

The soft south wind was soon changed for a very high and terrible northeast wind. And now the ship was tossed up and down like a mad thing.

In all haste the sailors got her under the shelter of a little island named Clauda, and then tried to get up the boat which floated after them tied by a rope. It was hard work to get this boat on board. When they had got it up, they wound a rope round the ship to keep it together, for they were afraid the boards would split and the ship go to pieces. What straining of arms, what pulling, what dragging, were seen that day on deck, as the wretched crew bound the ropes around their battered vessel!

The tossing of the waves continued till the sailors thought they must make the ship lighter by casting away all heavy things; so beds and boards, chains and poles, were thrown into the sea. But the ship seemed nothing the better for it all, as the wind was as furious as ever.

And now the men on board began to give up all hope of being saved. But Paul knew that he himself could not be lost, because God had declared to him long ago that he should see Rome. But this was not enough for Paul; his loving heart desired that all in the ship might be saved, and he made continual prayer to God for every one.

And God answered him by sending an angel in the night to comfort him.

For some time past the sun had never been seen in the sky through the dark clouds overhead, nor had the moon or stars appeared. No one could sit down to take a meal; all were too wretched and too ill. Even Paul did not eat, for his heart was full of care for the rest.

What the Angel Said.

One day he stood up on deck in the midst of the trembling troop of sailors and soldiers, and spoke. Amid the howling of the winds and roaring of waves he spoke, and all now listened to every word: Sirs, you should have listened to me, and not have left that haven in Crete. But now be of good cheer; there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but only of the ship; for there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, and said, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and lo, God hath given thee all those who sail with thee. So, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be as it was told me, only we must be shipwrecked upon an island.

Paul knew not the name of that island. All the ship's company now saw that Paul was a prophet. We may be sure that he

told them of Jesus, who died for them and rose again; for Paul never forgot that he was God's servant, as he said, Whose I am and whom I serve.

Day after day the ship continued to be tossed about by the waves. Fourteen days had now passed away since the ship had left the Fair Havens in Crete. All this time it had been rolling upon the stormy sea, the crew not knowing when it would reach land.

The sailors often let down the plummet to measure the depth of the ocean. This plummet was a cord, with a stone or some weight at the end. The sailors knew that if land was near, the sea would be less deep.

One night when the plummet was let down, the sailors found that the sea was not very deep. When let down again, they found the sea was still less deep.

They now hoped that land was near. They were glad, yet they were frightened, for there are often rocks near the shore. They dreaded lest the ship should be dashed against rocks and broken to pieces. So they thought it best to make it stop its course. They let down four anchors to hook it fast to the bottom of the sea; for one anchor would not have been strong enough in such a rough sea.

The Ropes are Cut.

After this was done the people in the ship longed very earnestly for the sun to rise. The sailors did very wrong this night. They made a plan of escaping in the little boat. Yet they knew that the other people in the ship could not do without them, as none but sailors can manage a ship.

Though it was dark, Paul knew what those selfish sailors were going to do, and he told the centurion. He said to him and to the soldiers, Except those sailors stay in the ship, you [soldiers] cannot be saved.

Then the soldiers cut the ropes that fastened the boat to the ship, and soon the boat was tossed to a distance. Now the sailors could not get in it. The darkness was not yet gone. All on board were watching for the light with anxious hearts, and the light was beginning to come.

Then Paul spoke to them all. He said they had now been fourteen days without eating a meal, and that they needed food. No doubt every one had taken a morsel now and then, but not a meal.

Paul Cheers Those on Board.

Then Paul begged them to eat. For, said he, there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you. It was his God who told him this.

Then Paul took some bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of all on board. The heathen men heard Paul give thanks to the God of heaven, the father of the Lord Jesus Christ. After grace Paul broke the bread, and began to eat. Then all on board felt cheerful and happy, and they also ate bread.

There was a great number to eat bread—two hundred and seventy-six—and many loaves must have been eaten in that night-breakfast.

Afterwards they were strong enough to throw some more things into the sea, especially a quantity of wheat. They were in hopes of keeping the ship from sinking, but Paul had told them some time ago that it must be lost. Oh, how they longed to know where they were!

But it was now November, near winter, and the sun did not rise till half-past six. At last the day dawned. The ship's company looked up and saw land at a short distance.

The shore was rocky and dangerous. In

the midst of it was an opening, called a creek. At the entrance to the creek—a heap of mud and clay was concealed. The sailors tried to drive the ship into this creek. First they lifted up the anchors, to set the ship free, and then they unfurled the chief sail to get forward.

They did not know there was a mass of clay and mud under the water, till the ship stuck fast in it, and so they could get no farther. Very soon the violence of the waves broke the hinder part of the ship, and quite destroyed it.

All Are Saved.

The soldiers then made a very wicked proposal. They said to the centurion, Is there not a risk of the prisoners escaping into the sea, and running away? Will not the judges of Rome be very angry? Had we not better kill the prisoners? For if we tell the judges at Rome that we killed them, they will not punish us, but they will if we say the prisoners got away.

This plan was very selfish and cruel. Shall Paul be killed? There were other prisoners besides Paul. They may have been wicked men, but still they ought not to be killed before they were tried.

The centurion did not agree to the soldiers' plan, for he loved Paul and wished to save him. Well he might, for had not Paul saved all their lives? For it was he who hindered the sailors from getting off in the boat, as they meant slyly to do.

No, answered the centurion to the ungrateful soldiers; none of the prisoners shall be killed. Let them swim to land if they can.

So they did swim to land. I believe Paul could swim, for he had once—a long while ago—been a night and a day in the deep. Those who could not swim caught hold of boards and broken pieces of the ship, and got safe to land.

Not one of the two hundred and seventy-six was lost in the wreck. No, not a hair of their heads was hurt. They were wet and cold, but they had not a limb bruised or a bone broken. Only the ship was lost.

Thus all that Paul said came true. Perhaps Julius, the kind centurion, may now have believed, but the deceitful sailors and the cruel soldiers had not believed.

When all the shipwrecked men came to land they saw people on the shore. They found that the place was an island, called Melita. Its name now is Malta.

The inhabitants were rather wild. They were neither Greeks nor Romans; so they were called barbarians by those proud nations. They were ignorant of books, and they wore rough clothes, but they were kind-hearted. When they saw the poor, shivering, dripping strangers on the shore, they quickly lighted a large fire, and gave to all whatever they needed. It was now raining, and the poor creatures must have wanted dry clothes.

A Deadly Viper.

Paul, instead of warming himself by the fire, went about gathering sticks to keep it up. He did not think that a great apostle ought not to help, but let others gather sticks. No; he was ready to do anything, he was so humble. He brought a bundle of sticks and laid it on the fire, when suddenly out of the flame sprang a viper, and lo, it fastened on Paul's hand!

That viper had been coiled around some sticks that Paul had gathered, and perhaps it was then asleep, or half frozen; but the heat had revived it and made it spring out of the fire. There it was, with its fangs on the apostle's flesh, hanging down from his hand.

The barbarians looked at it, and knew it to be a viper whose bite would kill. They

540 THE SHIPWRECK OF ST. PAUL ON HIS WAY TO ROME.

said to each other, No doubt that man is a murderer who has escaped drowning in the sea, but justice will not allow him to live. They thought that their gods were angry with him, and were going to punish him.

But Paul shook off the viper from his hand into the fire, and he felt no harm at all from the bite.

The barbarians kept on looking at Paul, expecting to see him swell and fall down dead suddenly; but they looked a great while and saw no harm come to him. Then they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

We are sure that Paul would not let them worship him. You remember how he forbade the men of Lystra to worship him and Barnabas; and he had the same feelings still. He desired nothing but to bring the barbarians to worship the true God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A very rich man lived close by the place where Paul was shipwrecked. His name was Publius. We believe he was the governor of the island. This island belonged to the Romans, and had a governor from Rome.

But though Publius was a Roman and a heathen, he was very kind to the apostle, and invited him and his friends to stay three days in his house.

The Sick Are Healed.

What a change it was for Paul, after being so long in prison, to come to a fine house, and to be treated with honor! Luke and Aristarchus, of course, came with him, and probably Julius, the kind centurion. It is certain that he praised Paul, and that he told Publius that he did not deserve to be a prisoner.

It was a good thing for Publius that he invited Paul to his house, for the poor old father of Publius lived there, and he now lay ill of a very bad fever. When Paul heard of it he went into the old man's room and prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him.

The news of this miracle soon spread wide, and a number of sick people flocked around Paul to be healed; and they were healed. When Paul left the house of Publius there were many doors open to him. Every one wanted to have such a wonderful man in his house.

Paul stayed in the island three months. During all that time he preached and prayed, and he showed many poor barbarians the way of salvation. At the end of three months the spring was come and the sea was smooth. The centurion hired a ship to take his whole company to the shores of Rome.

They Reach a Harbor.

Paul now parted from his new friends in Malta. He found them very grateful. They loaded Paul and his friends, Luke and Aristarchus, with many presents.

Paul and his friends were much in need of clothing, for they had lost all at sea. But everything they wanted, whether clothing or nice food, was supplied to them.

They are many dried fruits, such as figs and raisins, in hot countries; and there is abundance of oranges. Everything refreshing was put into the ship by the generous barbarians. We may be sure that a blessing rested upon them for all this kindness to God's people.

The ship sailed with a fair wind to the shores of Italy till it came to a fine harbor, called Pu-te-o-li, more than a hundred miles from Rome.

This harbor was a grand place. Ships from all parts rode on its smooth waters. The shore was beautiful, for its hills were

planted with gardens. Here Paul landed, still chained to a soldier, accompanied by his friends. Great was his joy to find Christians ready to receive him. The kind Julius allowed him to spend seven days with his friends.

had come from from Rome on purpose to welcome him. Seeing them pleased his heart so much that he thanked God and took courage. At last he arrived at Rome, with a troop of loving friends around him, as well as the soldier to whom he was chained.

ST. PAUL'S ARRIVAL AT ROME IN CHAINS.

The day came for the centurion to lead his prisoner to Rome. He took him along a well-paved road, very near the seacoast. Every twenty miles there was a kind of inn for the travellers to rest.

On the road Paul met some friends who

When Paul was arrived in Rome, where did he go? As he was a prisoner, he ought to have been taken to the place where the soldiers lived. It was a great square with buildings on every side, and a great ditch outside. But he was not taken to that noisy,

crowded place, like the other prisoners. Paul was allowed to live in a lodging of his own, though he was always to be chained to a soldier.

Do you ask why he was allowed this great privilege of living in a lodging? I suppose it was through the kindness of Julius, the centurion.

Do you ask how it was that Paul could pay for a lodging? I suppose it was through the kindness of his friends in Rome. There were a great many in Rome who loved Paul much. When Paul had stayed three days in Rome, he sent a message to the chief Jews in the city. The message was—to ask them to come to see him in his lodging.

The chief Jews were soon on the way to see Paul. They had often heard of him, but very few had ever seen him; and they must have longed to see such a wonderful man. They found him weak and worn, bowed down with age and sorrow, but full of love and kindness. The soldier was chained to his arm.

Paul thought these Jews might have heard from other Jews that he had done something wicked. Paul assured them that he had done nothing at all to deserve being in chains. All he had done to offend the Jews was to preach about the resurrection.

The Jews told Paul that they should like to know what he preached about. Then Paul fixed a day for them to come again to hear him.

The Jews Have a Dispute.

Early in the morning they came. Paul then began to explain to them out of the prophets all about Jesus. He showed them how Isaiah called him a lamb brought to the slaughter; how David said his hands and feet should be pierced, and many other such things.

All day long Paul spoke about Jesus. When the evening came the Jews talked together. One said: Paul speaks the truth. I believe that Jesus died and rose again. Another Jew said: But I do not believe what Paul says.

In this way they disputed together. Before they went away, Paul told the unbelieving Jews that the Gentiles would hear of the Saviour, and would believe in him. The Jews went home, talking all the way about what Paul had said.

For two whole years Paul dwelt in his own lodging. Any one, who wished to be taught, might come to him. Though Paul could not preach in the synagogues, or in the streets, or on the hills, he could preach in his house. No one forbade him to preach, and many people came to him. This is the last thing said of him in the Bible.

The Noble Martyr.

Luke did not write any more of Paul's history. Still we learn from other books that Paul was at last beheaded at Rome. We know that he wished to die for Jesus, and he had his wish. We read nothing more in the Bible about any of the apostles, except John. The last book in the Bible gives an account of the wonderful things he saw in his old age.

After Nero Cæsar was dead, another wicked Cæsar reigned, named Domitian. He sent John to a little rocky island near Greece. It was named Patmos, and there wicked men, who had committed great crimes, were often sent to work hard at digging up stones.

The island is only a quarter the size of Malta. Any one could walk round it in a day. It is full of mountains. There are caves among the mountains.

In this rugged island John was made to live. But on the Lord's day he heard a

voice behind him as of a trumpet, and looking back he saw his Saviour, the Lord Jesus. He wore now a glorious body, quite different from that suffering body on which John once leaned his head. Now John was so filled with fear that he fell at his feet as dead. Then Jesus laid his hand upon him and said, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Then he told John to write seven letters to Christians who lived in seven places in Asia.

The first letter was to Ephesus, where Paul had preached, and where John had lived a long while. It was a short letter, praising the Christians for some things, and blaming them for not loving Jesus as much as they once did.

After John had written the seven letters in the words of Jesus, he looked and saw a door opened in heaven, and he heard a voice saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which shall happen hereafter.

The Rainbow Round the Throne.

So John was in the Spirit, and saw a throne in heaven, and one shining on the throne; a rainbow round about the throne; and a Lamb, as it had been slain in the midst of the throne; and many glorious saints and angels round the throne, singing the praises of the Father and the Son.

They praised the Father—because he created all things; and they praised the Lamb—because he had redeemed his people by his blood.

John saw many terrible sights. He saw hail, and fire, and blood, and smoke, and brimstone, and plagues, and devils, and earthquakes.

At last he saw Jesus come like a great warrior, on a white horse; followed by armies on white horses, clothed in linen white and clean.

He saw the old serpent shut up in a pit, so deep that it had no bottom, for a thousand years.

He saw the righteous dead reign with Christ for a thousand years.

The Beautiful City.

He saw Satan let loose for a little while, and in the end he saw him cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented for ever and ever.

He saw the great white throne, and all men stand before God to be judged. He saw the dead rise from their graves, and he saw some cast into the lake of fire.

He saw a city come down from heaven to the earth, shining like precious stones. He heard that all whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life shall live in this city.

An angel showed him all these things, and told him about them.

But Jesus spoke to him also and said, All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

Jesus ended by saying, Surely I come quickly.

And John answered, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Sacred Allegories.

By Rev. William Adams.

THE KING'S MESSENGERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE city of Metecia lay to the west of the dominions of a Great King. It was an ancient city, and had gradually become very large and populous. But the original settlers had been placed there in consequence of a rebellion against the King's authority; and a remarkable law continued to prevail among their descendants as a memorial of their crime. No one was allowed to remain in it above a certain number of years, and no one, when he left it, was permitted to take any portion of his property with him. This was called the law of Exile. The Great King had himself enacted it, and the citizens had no resource but submission.

There was not even a fixed and definite period allotted for their stay. They were liable at any moment to receive the Royal Mandate. It came to them also one by one. As each was summoned to depart, his dearest friends could only accompany him as far as the gates of the city. And he was then stripped of all his possessions, and sent forth as an exile on his solitary journey.

Now, as the inhabitants of Metecia were principally merchants, one would have imagined that such a law must have proved a source of perpetual disquietude and alarm. Yet this was not the case. Occasionally, indeed, when it was enforced against a very rich man, it would awaken sad thoughts in his companions, and cause them to mourn over the uncertainty of their wealth.

But, for the most part, they all lived on in a false security. Every one fancied his possessions to be as really his own as though he had been able to retain them at will. Such a delusion may appear unaccountable; but we must remember that they had gradually become accustomed to the law, and for that reason it was lightly regarded by them or altogether forgotten.

Pity for the Poor Exiles.

The Great King, however, was full of compassion, and took much thought for the poor exiles, who were thus careless of themselves. He knew how dark and dreary was the wilderness that surrounded the city, and was unwilling that any should be left there to perish. He did not, indeed, reverse his original decree, but he did far more than this. He changed it from a punishment

into a blessing. He offered to receive the exiles into a better and more glorious city than that from which he took them.

If they rejected this offer the fault was their own. All the conditions on which it was made was very easy, and the King himself had promised to enable the citizens to perform them. But we need not dwell upon them all, for one alone, which applied more especially to the wealthier merchants, is brought before us by the present story.

A Gorgeous Room.

In the city of Metecia dwelt four brothers, Philargyr, Megacles, Euprepes, and Sophron. At the period at which I commence their history, the sentence of exile had lately been pronounced against their father. He had been a merchant of enormous wealth, and as, in accordance with the law, he was allowed to take nothing for his own wants, the whole of his vast possessions had fallen into the hands of his children. They had met in order to divide them.

The room in which they assembled for this purpose was filled with the most costly furniture. The floor was covered with cloth of gold, which was now partially concealed by bales of yet more valuable merchandise, and heaps of precious stones, which had been placed there to await the choice of the brothers.

Two sides of the apartment were hung with the most gorgeous tapestry, on the third was a window commanding an extensive view towards the west, while the wall opposite to the window was entirely covered by a spacious mirror, which reflected the various objects in the room itself and the street beyond.

But, in the midst of all this external splendor, a cloud sat on the countenance of each of the brothers. The departure of their father was too recent to allow them to forget the transitory character of the treasures which they were about to share. Let a few years pass, and each in his turn would be compelled to leave them, and go forth without money, without home, and without friends, into the dreary desert that lay around the city.

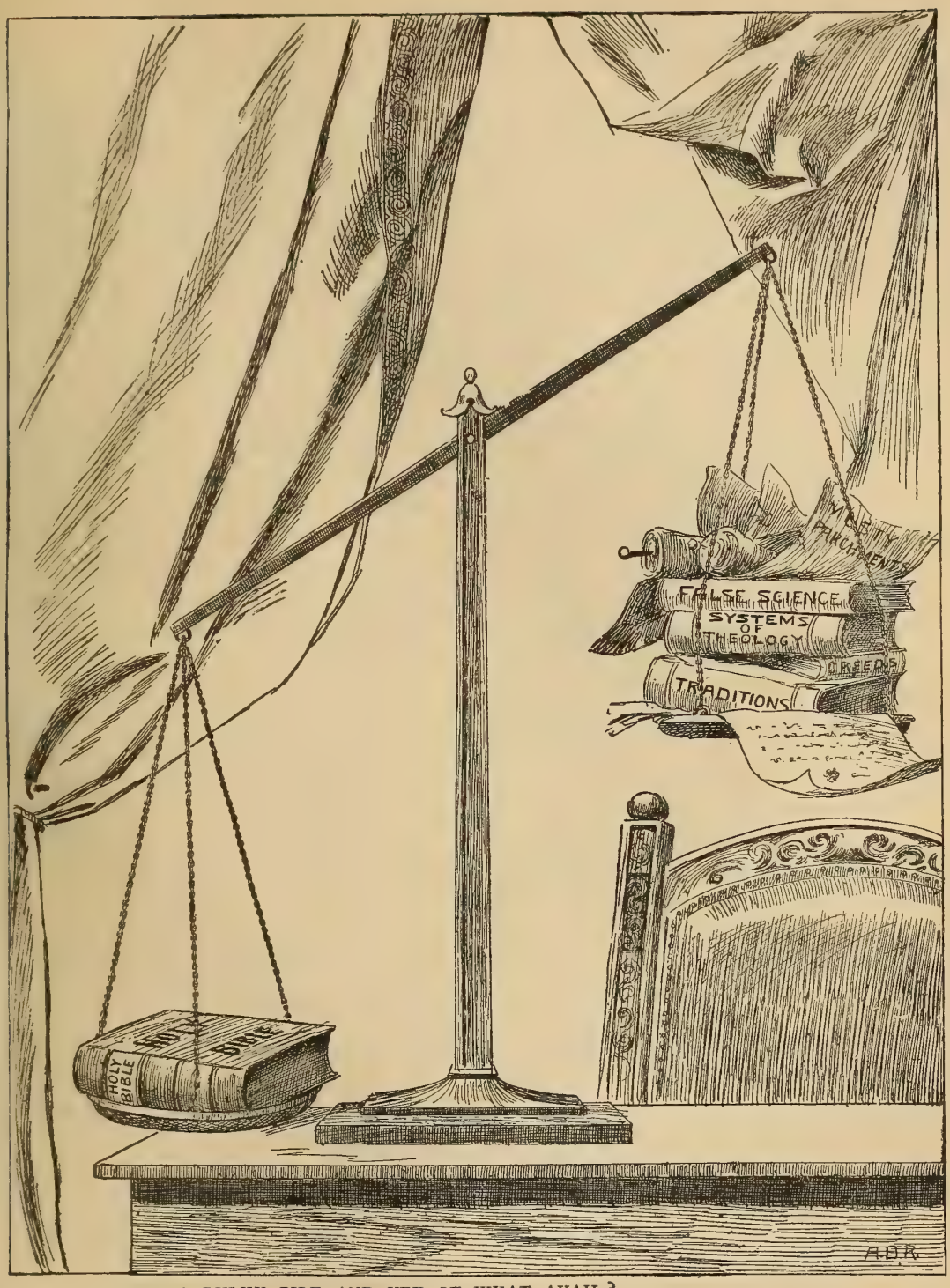
It was these thoughts which rendered them sad. They had never before felt the full burthen of the law of Exile; they had been aware of its existence, for no citizen could be ignorant of it; but hitherto they had seen it, as it were, in the distance.

It now seemed to meet them directly in their own path, and to force itself on their attention; so that the eldest brother did but echo the feelings of the rest when he said, "Of what profit is this enormous wealth? In the day of our banishment it will not purchase for us the delay of a single hour. How gladly would I barter the whole of it for some quiet dwelling-place where we might remain in security for ever!"

A Strange Image in the Mirror.

He had not yet finished speaking, when his eyes were attracted by the mirror, which I have described as covering one side of the room. Some image appeared to be moving across it, which was not visible in the apartment itself. He pointed it out to his brothers, and it was clear from their anxious looks that they beheld it also. It was as the form of an old man.

There was nothing in his appearance to excite terror, but every object as seen in the mirror was changed by his presence. His foot trod on the cloth of gold, and it became mouldering and worm-eaten: the hem of his garment swept against a table of solid ivory, and it fell crumbling into dust: while the bales of merchandise and precious stones



A BULKY PILE, AND YET OF WHAT AVAIL?
ONE BOOK OF GREATER WORTH BRINGS DOWN THE SCALE.

lost their richness and splendor, as his cold eye rested upon them.

The brothers watched these signs with a sensation of chilling fear, and the eldest already repented his hasty words. For, in truth, in his inmost heart, he deeply loved the glittering wealth, and he was afraid, lest the mysterious stranger might take it away, and give him in its stead the quiet dwelling for which he had asked.

At length it seemed to them that the image of the old man thus addressed them: "Children, your wish is in vain. You must not speak of bartering these treasures for a lasting home. They are not really yours; they belong to the Great King, whose subjects you are. Restore them to him now, and he will keep them for you, and in the day of your exile give them to you again. In this city they are worthless. See how even my slightest touch here causes them to decay. But in the King's Palace they become incorruptible. I have no power over them there."

The Old Man's Reply.

The brothers were yet more troubled at his words. They knew well that all the riches of Metecia belonged to the Great King; but they were disquieted at the thought of restoring them to him again. A vague fear arose that the sentence of exile was about to be passed against themselves; and all, in some degree, shared the apprehensions of Philargyr.

The old man appeared to read their thoughts, and thus replied to them:

"Fear not; I am not now come to deprive you of your wealth. Hereafter, indeed, I shall return with the Royal Mandate, but in that hour you will both see and feel that I am near. To-day my voice comes to you from a distance, and it is but my reflected image that you behold. Yet I bear you a message from the Great King. You have wished to purchase for yourselves a lasting home; I have said that you cannot purchase it, because your riches are not your own; they belong to the Great King. You must trust them freely to his Messengers, without asking for a return; and he will store them up for you in his own palace, and when you are driven from hence, will suffer you to dwell with his children in a Glorious City where the law of Exile is unknown.

"But beware lest you neglect this warning, and defraud the Great King of the riches committed to your trust; for if you refuse to give them to his Messengers, and either hoard them up or spend them on yourselves, you will have no treasure laid up for you in the Royal Palace, and the gates of the Glorious City will be closed against you forever."

Now, there was nothing really new to the merchants in the old man's warning. The royal offers of pardon, and the dangers of the neglect of them, were well known in the city. But the inhabitants seldom spoke of them to one another, because they loved their riches, and were unwilling to render obedience to the King's commands.

How the Treasures Were to be Sent.

The brothers had hitherto shared in the general feeling; and it was, perhaps, only because the remembrance of their father's departure was weighing heavily upon them that they had so long listened to the voice which now addressed them. It did not, indeed, seem to pass through their ears at all, but to fall at once inwardly on their hearts, and for the present they could not help regarding it. Yet all shrank from asking in what way they were to send their treasures to the Royal Palace.

They were not, however, left in doubt. The reflection of the street in which their house stood was, as I have said, visible in the mirror. The figure of the old man now pointed towards it; and as he did so the young merchants heard distinctly the words: "Behold the Messengers of the Great King!"

They followed the direction of his finger, and it seemed to them that the approach to their luxurious dwelling was now crowded with every form of disease and want. The poor, the maimed, and the blind were there. Men who seemed stimulated to madness by famine, and little infants who could scarce crawl upon the ground, formed part of the same vast concourse.

Still, as the old man pointed, their numbers went on increasing, in every direction, until, as far as the eye could reach, every sign of wealth and luxury had disappeared, and in their stead was one universal scene of misery. Presently the shrieks of the dying, the cries of orphans, and the wailing of widows, rose in the air; and then, out of the tumult, the low solemn voice of the old man fell once more on the hearts of the brothers.

As Beautiful as Ever.

"These," he said, "and such as these, are the Messengers of the Great King. Numerous as they are, they will come to you in secret and one by one. Trust them with your treasure, and it will be safe; they will bear it for you to the Royal Palace. The journey thither is long and dangerous; but if you are sincere in your wish to send it, the Great King will not suffer it to be lost. Only do not cause them to linger needlessly within the city walls; and let their departure be secret, lest the King's enemies should impede them on their way."

The form of the old man gradually disappeared as he ceased speaking, and the signs of his presence passed away; the ivory table, the cloth of gold, and the heaps of precious stones, resumed the beauty and splendor which they had lost. The brothers once more breathed freely. Hitherto their eyes had been riveted by a kind of fascination on the mirror. They now looked anxiously around the apartment itself; but it had undergone no change. If the old man had trodden upon it, not one trace of his footsteps had been left.

A Crowd of Beggars.

They then turned their eyes towards the window. The street presented its usual appearance; there was the busy throng hurrying hither and thither, and splendid equipages and wagons laden with merchandise. But they saw nothing to remind them of the view presented by the mirror, save come few beggars who chanced to linger at their door.

As Philargyr threw open the sash to inhale the fresh air, they eagerly asked the young merchants for alms; and there was not one who at that moment could refuse to give them; for the words of the stranger were fresh in their memory, and they felt every poor man to be a Messenger from the Great King.

The brothers were too deeply affected by the warning of the old man to proceed to the immediate division of their wealth. At one time, they even contemplated holding it in common, and consulted together on the best means of restoring it to the Great King. But, from the first, their views differed so greatly, that they could agree on no settled plan: and during the interval consumed in their discussions, their feelings underwent a partial change. The words of

the stranger seemed to lose their distinctness. Their riches recovered, in some degree, the value they had lost; and at length they reverted to their original plan of dividing them into four parts, so that each might take his own share, and do with it as he pleased.

The Brothers Divide the Property.

Philargyr was entrusted with the division. Many months elapsed while he was absorbed in his calculations, and settling how large a portion he might appropriate to himself. During this time he was more than once interrupted by Messengers from the Great King. But their applications were in vain. He always returned the same answer, that, until the property was divided, no portion of it could be transmitted to the Royal Palace.

At length the division was made. The younger brothers were satisfied, though none were able to follow the calculations of Philargyr. Each had a share assigned to him, which, considering the shortness of their probable sojourn in the city, seemed inexhaustible, and each was left to follow his own course.

I proceed to give a brief sketch of their history.

The remarkable point in that of Philagyr, the eldest, was his utter forgetfulness, not only of the old man's warning, but of the law of the city in which he dwelt. Every act of his life appeared to set them at defiance. His one great object was to accumulate wealth. He neither trusted it to the King's Messengers, nor spent it in procuring the good-will of his fellow-citizens, but hoarded it up within the walls of his own house.

There was no present gratification that he would not sacrifice in the hope of adding to his possessions for future years. And this he did with the sentence of exile hanging over his head, and the positive certainty, that, when he left the city, he would not be allowed to take the smallest portion of them away.

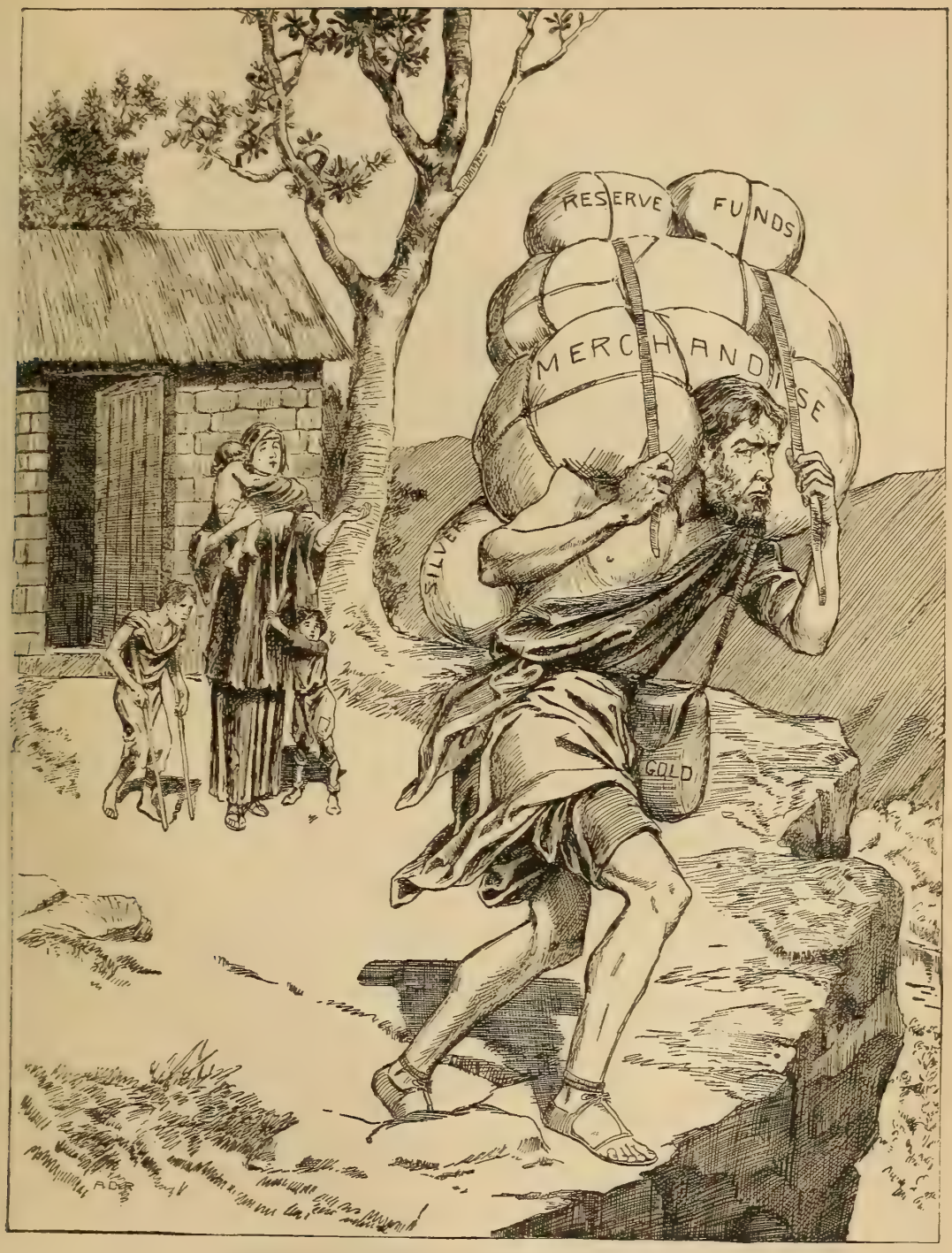
A Startling Legend.

I have already said, that the inhabitants of Metecia lived, for the most part, in forgetfulness of the law of Exile. But the conduct of Philargyr appeared unaccountable even to the most thoughtless among them. He was supposed to be under the influence of a spell; and the following legend was commonly reported through the city:

There had been, it was rumored, a mine of gold communicating with the house of the departed merchant. Philargyr had taken possession of it, unknown to his brothers. This mine was haunted by an evil spirit, who had beguiled him by specious offers of assistance. For a time they had labored together; but the evil spirit, while pretending to work out the precious ore, had changed the mine into a dungeon, and bound Philargyr hand and foot with chains of gold. After he had thus made him captive, he refused to allow him to return to the upper air, unless he would become his slave, and labor incessantly in bringing new treasures to the mine.

It was further said that the golden bonds had never from that hour been removed: and that, though they were invisible to the naked eye, the signs of their presence might be detected in every look and gesture of the unhappy merchant. Thus his head was continually bent downwards, and his very walk constrained and embarrassed, because the chains and fetters that he wore weighed heavily upon him and impeded his steps.

Strange as this legend seems, it was, in the main, true. One part alone was incorrect. The spirit of the gold mine had not used



LOUDLY THE LEAN AND HUNGRY POOR COMPLAIN,
YET TO THE MISER THEY APPEAL IN VAIN.

threats or violence; he had, throughout, accomplished his purpose by treachery; and Philargyr had sunk, imperceptibly, into a state of servitude. His chains had been light and flexible when they were first twined around his limbs. It was while he wore them that, by little and little, they had increased in size and strength.

Bound in Chains.

For such was the nature of those bonds, that, when newly wrought, they were most easily broken. For this reason, he was not suffered to feel their pressure until they had been hardened by time; and even then, the change was so gradual, that Philargyr was not aware of it. The signs of his bondage, which seemed so clear to others, passed unnoticed by himself.

Still, however, he was a slave, and by little and little incurred the full misery of servitude, though to the last unconscious of its cause. Morning, noon and evening he labored for an insatiable master, who allowed him no share in the profits of his toil. Every day was passed in drudgery and weariness; every night in anxiety and care. Not an hour was given him to share the amusements of his fellow-citizens; not an hour for the duties of hospitality; not an hour for the quiet enjoyment of home. His whole time was claimed by the spirit of the gold-mine; and very heavy and monotonous was the task imposed upon him.

If a child were forced to go on hour after hour casting up a sum, the figures of which were innumerable, he might form some idea of the employment of Philargyr. His wealth was to him but as an endless sum, and his most successful enterprises did but add some new figure to the account.

Yet even this would give no just notion of his misery. He could not help believing the old man's warning, though his whole life was at variance with his belief. He knew that his buried treasure would be worse than useless when the day of his exile arrived. The gates of the Glorious City would be closed against him, and endless wanderings in the dreary wilderness were certain to succeed the present season of anxiety and toil. His heart often shrank within him, as he witnessed the averted looks of the Messengers of the Great King. They did not even offer to carry his treasures to the Royal Palace, for long experience had taught them that it was a waste of words to seek employment from Philargyr.

Again and again had he resolved to entrust them with some portion of his wealth, but the subtle chains of gold withheld his hand, and while he was struggling against them, the opportunity passed by, and he deferred till the morrow his intended gift.

Superb Dwellings and Towers.

While the eldest of the four brothers thus labored incessantly for the spirit of the mine, the second was following a very different path. He was unfettered by any chain of gold, and his bearing was high and noble; his step firm and free. He looked down on his very riches with disdain, and they won him the envy and admiration of his fellow-citizens instead of their pity and contempt. But while in every other respect his conduct afforded a marked contrast to that of Philargyr, there was one important point in which he resembled him. He neglected altogether the old man's warning.

There was a district in Metecia, far removed from the stir and traffic of the crowded streets, and farther still from the dwellings of the King's Messengers. It was remarkable for the beauty and costliness of its buildings. The erection of these

ormed a favorite occupation of the more wealthy merchants. Their appearance was very irregular, for the size and form of each varied with the taste and resources of the individual who raised it.

But all might be comprehended under two great classes. Some were frail and unsubstantial, and intended to please the eye for one short summer, and then make way for others not less perishable than themselves, while some were built of firm and durable materials, in the hope that they might stand for centuries as memorials of their architects. The one class were for the most part called villas of Pleasure—the other towers of Fame.

Story of a Great Building.

It was to the erection of one of these latter that Megacles devoted his vast wealth. The whole energy of his mind was given to this single object, and its gradual accomplishment was watched by his fellow-citizens with the most eager interest. The raising of the tower formed quite an epoch in the history of Metecia. Wonderful stories were told of the depth of its foundations and the thickness of its walls.

Each of the vast stones seemed to have its own legend annexed to it, while the quarry from which they came, and the names of the workmen, and every detail connected with the building, were carefully preserved in the annals of the city. But all this I must pass over very briefly, for the King's Messengers had no share in the work; and from this cause the whole narrative of the tower, which appeared so eventful to Megacles and his brother merchants, has but little interest in the present story.

The whole soul of Megacles was absorbed in the erection of the building; and these few words comprise his history. He did not keep aloof from his fellow-citizens, but he made his intercourse with them subservient to this one object. If he visited the crowded streets, it was in order to select workmen of skill and strength. If he went into the market-place, it was to change his gold and jewels for blocks of marble and granite.

His perseverance was rewarded, and his work prospered. Day after day the tower increased in size and beauty. It was to no purpose that the wind and storm beat against it; the firm foundations defied their power. The wreck of the surrounding buildings was made to assist its growth. Some of these had been left as fragments, in consequence of the sudden exile of the architects. Some were mouldering away with the lapse of time; and some were purposely undermined by the workmen of Megacles. He selected from the ruins of each such stones as seemed suited for the accomplishment of his design; until at length his tower arose so far above every other in the city, that it appeared to stand by itself in solitary grandeur.

He Feared Earthquakes.

The more it grew, the more was the mind of Megacles absorbed in its growth. It seemed to exercise a fascination over him, and from the day in which it became visible from every part of the city, his eye was seldom withdrawn from it. This may in part account for his neglect of the King's Messengers. His look was raised above them while he watched his tower. Even if they ventured to speak to him, their voices failed to arrest his attention; for his ear had been so long filled with the din and tumult of building, that it had been rendered deaf to any gentler sound.

Yet, notwithstanding his success, Megacles was not happy. He was perpetually changing or adding to his tower. It never seemed to have attained the perfection that

he designed. He remembered also how the city of Metecia was liable to the shock of earthquakes, so that at any moment the vast fabric might be shaken from the foundation, and reduced to a heap of ruins.

Neither was this all. Even at those times in which he was able to view with unmingled satisfaction the tower itself, there was still a cloud upon his vision of glory. It had arisen, in the first instance, from the simple question of a poor wayfaring man. Megacles had observed him gaze earnestly at the building, and then turn aside, as though to conceal his tears. He could not help inquiring what train of thoughts it had called forth to lead to such an expression of sorrow.

There was a strange sadness in the wayfarer's reply. "I was thinking," he said, "how long this tower was calculated to last."—"How long!" exclaimed Megacles, with indignant pride; "centuries on centuries will elapse, and there shall be no symptoms of decay."—"And I was also thinking," he continued, in the same melancholy tone, "how long its possessor will remain within its walls!"

Remembers the Old Man's Warning.

The wayfarer had disappeared before Megacles could reply, but the unwelcome words kept recurring to his mind in spite of every effort to suppress them. It was true that only half the period usually allotted to the merchants for their sojourn in Metecia had as yet passed by; but he knew that, at any moment, his sentence of exile might be pronounced, and that the strength of his tower would not delay its enforcement for a single hour.

The warning of the old man now came back to his remembrance, and brought with it new feelings of disquietude and alarm. Where were the immense riches that had been entrusted to his care? Had any portion of them been laid up in the Royal Palace? Alas! he shrank from the reply. He had not, indeed, buried them in the earth like Philargyr.

On the contrary, he had often lavished them with an unsparing hand. But, while he had seldom failed to examine those who came for them on their health, their strength, and their skill in building, he had forgotten the one only important question,—he had never asked, whether they were Messengers of the Great King.

Fear of Ridicule.

There was a time when, as these thoughts passed through the mind of Megacles, he half formed the resolution of pulling down, stone by stone, the tower which he had raised, and giving the materials to the King's Messengers. But the dread of ridicule and pride of heart prevailed. He felt that he should incur the mockery of his brother merchants, if, after years of incessant labor, his own hand were to destroy the sole produce of his toil.

He once more fixed his gaze steadfastly on the lofty building, and resolved to suppress every doubt and alarm. His efforts were at length successful. Not only did his former triumphant feeling return, but a yet more fatal delusion seized him. He fancied the story of the King's Messengers, and the Royal Palace, and the Glorious City, to be a mere invention; and maintained that, notwithstanding the law of Exile, the only sure and lasting resting-place was to be found in the tower of Fame.

Alas! even while he was giving vent to these boastful words, his own sentence of exile had gone forth, and the bearer of the Royal Mandate was at hand. But we must leave him awhile, to follow the history of the two remaining brothers.

CHAPTER II.

THE story of Euprepes, the third brother, differs greatly from the two that have preceded it. The warning of the old man did not merely leave a transient impression upon his mind, but gave a coloring to his whole course of action. He talked of it loudly and frequently to his fellow-citizens, and described, in affecting language, the wonderful vision which the mirror had disclosed. As soon as he received his share of his father's wealth, he resolved to spend no portion on the pleasures of the city, but to transmit the whole to the King's Palace.

He did not fail to make public his intention; and there was no lack of Messengers. First one, then another came, each with his own tale of poverty or distress, and each promising to carry safely the treasure committed to his trust. Euprepes gave to all alike with an unsparing hand; but he soon grew weary of the monotony of the employment. All went on quietly day after day. There was no interest or excitement. His proceedings were either unobserved or disregarded by the greater part of the inhabitants of the city. He fancied that this was, in part, the fault of his Messengers. As soon as they received his gifts, they used studiously to conceal them and shrink from the observation of those who met them in the streets.

In order to prevent this, he directed that they should carry the bags of money openly in their hands, and from time to time give public notice of the object of their journey. Some few refused compliance, and were immediately dismissed his service. This expedient, in part, succeeded. The Messengers were often seen and questioned, and more than one friend congratulated Euprepes on the store he was laying up in the Royal Palace. Still, however, he was dissatisfied. He required something more than this. The way of sending the money seemed to him out of keeping both with the vastness of his wealth and with the important object for which it was sent. Bright visions would cross his mind of long triumphal processions through the streets of the city, and of shouts and acclamations attending their progress.

A Herald with a Golden Trumpet.

Now, while he was indulging these thoughts, a man in the garb of a herald stood before him. His form, at first, was dim and uncertain; but as the young merchant gazed upon it, it gradually increased in distinctness. He wore a gorgeous livery, and had a golden trumpet in his hand.

He thus addressed himself to Euprepes: "Your noble purpose has been long known to me; neither have you been remiss in carrying it into effect. But there is one thing which you have forgotten. Such wealth as yours should not be trusted to a few scattered Messengers, who wander some here and some there, and hide themselves in the obscure corners of the city. You require the assistance of a herald to summon them all at a stated period, and then to marshal them in their ranks and arrange the order of their procession. Let, then, that office be mine."

The whole complexion of the life of

Euprepes was changed by this proposal. He at once adopted the herald's suggestion, and the monotony of which he had complained passed away. From henceforth his embassies to the Royal Palace excited no less interest in the city than the tower of Megacles, while they proved to himself a source of perpetual triumph.

It will be sufficient to describe one of them; for, though they seemed to his brother merchants to present an endless variety of appearance, the principal features in all are in reality alike, and the first embassy that he sent will give a true view of his history.

Shouts from the Multitude.

When the day for the grand procession had been fixed, the herald sounded his trumpet, and proclaimed it far and wide through the streets of the city. In the meanwhile the young merchant collected many costly bales of merchandise, and exchanged a large quantity of jewels for silver and gold. As all this was done publicly in the market-place, it tended greatly to increase the general interest. The doors of his own mansion were closed, and the few solitary Messengers who came to them from time to time were dismissed with orders to return together on the day announced by the herald.

On the appointed morning the windows of the neighboring houses were thronged with spectators. Presently the crowd thickened in the street, until the whole of it was blocked up by persons professing to be King's Messengers. So vast was the concourse that many a poor widow and orphan struggled in vain to pass through it, and returned sadly to their own homes, without once obtaining a sight of the dwelling of Euprepes.

At mid-day the young merchant appeared. He was attended by a splendid retinue of friends; near him were the bales of goods, and the gold and silver which he was about to distribute, but nearer still was the herald, who never failed to keep closely to his side. The sun shone fully upon them; and as its rays were reflected back by their bright apparel and the golden trumpet and the precious metals that lay scattered upon the ground, the air was rent with the acclamations of the assembled multitudes.

After the shouts had continued some minutes, the herald proclaimed silence; and Euprepes, taking coins of various sizes from the heaps at his side, scattered them indiscriminately among the people.

A Long Procession.

A scene of fearful confusion followed, while each Messenger struggled for his share. Many of the most weak and sickly were crushed and trodden under foot. The young merchant could see but a small portion of their sufferings, yet even that gave rise to painful thoughts; but the whisperings from within were quickly suppressed by the loud voice of the herald, as he proclaimed, "Hasten, hasten, ye Messengers; gather up the treasures of Euprepes the merchant, which he bids you bear to the distant Palace of the Great King."

It was not until the vast stores which Euprepes had provided for the occasion were exhausted that the tumult ceased. And then the herald arranged the Messengers in a long possession, that they might march publicly through the city.

It was a strange sight to see that troop of miserable objects, moving along to the sound of a trumpet, with all the external signs of triumph and joy. The misery of their general appearance formed, for the most

part, a singular contrast to the costly burdens which they bore. Many of them seemed conscious of this, and shrank instinctively from the observation of their fellows; but none were permitted to desert the order of march; and ever as they advanced onward the voice of the herald proclaimed louder and louder, "Behold, ye citizens, behold the riches of Euprepes, which he sends before him to the distant Palace of the Great King."

The Treasures They Carried.

The procession was so arranged as to be kept continually within view of the young merchant. He watched its course through the market-place, and up and down the principal streets of the city.

From the point at which he stood he could hear distinctly the shouts of the populace and the proclamation of the herald; and there he remained, watching and listening, until the shades of evening closed in, and the reality was lost in a bright and beautiful dream. For in the visions of the night procession after procession continued to pass before him; they were all laden with costly offerings for the Royal Palace,—some of silver and gold, some of bales of merchandise, some of glorious apparel,—but they kept moving round and round the city, and with the inconsistency of a dream it did not seem strange to Euprepes that, though bound on a distant journey, they never passed beyond its walls.

Such was the general aspect of the processions of Euprepes. Some exceeded others in pomp and magnificence; but each was proclaimed by the same trumpet, and set in order by the same herald; so that, as I before said, one description will suffice for them all.

Meanwhile, his resources seemed inexhaustible. It was as though his treasure kept returning to himself, and the more he gave the more he had to bestow. Of all the brothers he was by far the most popular; his sojourn in the city was cheered alike by the praises of the rich and the blessings of the poor.

There were, indeed, some who murmured and repined, but their complaints were drowned by the trumpet of the herald, and never reached the ears of Euprepes. He believed himself to be idolized by all within the city, at the same time that he was laying up for himself an inexhaustible store of wealth beyond its walls. Sometimes his feelings were those of quiet self-complacency, sometimes of joyous triumph; but they were rarely overclouded by the slightest shadow of doubtfulness or alarm.

Boasted of His Riches.

The pursuits of his elder brothers were regarded by him with a kind of contemptuous compassion. He would often stand in the bright sunshine on the rising ground where his house was built, and point in derision to the tower of Megacles, or describe with bitterness the yet sadder slavery of Philargyr; and then following with his eye the long train of his own Messengers he would conclude by saying, "I, too, have my tower, but it is built on a surer foundation; "I, too, have my treasures, but I have sent them to a safer home!"

The story of the fourth brother I cannot tell, for but little is known of his history. He did not resemble either Philargyr or Megacles, far he neither toiled and labored for the spirit of the gold-mine, nor built for himself a tower of Fame; and yet he was also unlike Euprepes, for no herald attended him on his walks, and there was no array of Messengers to be seen continually at his

door. Much of his time was passed in seclusion. His occupations were unknown; and he sojourned in the city of Metecia as one who scarcely belonged to it.

Those who watched with the greatest interest the different pursuits of the three elder brothers, were gradually led to forget the very existence of Sophron. There was no great event to mark it or force it upon their attention. At one time, indeed, he did excite a momentary sensation. He left the quarter of the city inhabited by the wealthy merchants and made a choice of a more lowly mansion, surrounded by the dwellings of the poor. His motives even for this change were never discovered. Some ascribed it to avarice, some to want. But it soon ceased to be a topic of conversation; and he was consigned to greater obscurity than before.

He Was Happier Every Day.

To the few friends who continued to visit him in his retirement he was always kind and hospitable; but there was a mystery about his way of life which they were unable to penetrate. As time went on, he still seemed to grow poorer and poorer. Some secret drain appeared to exhaust his wealth. No sign of luxury was seen in his abode; his dress was changed for one of less costly materials; and his diet was of the simplest kind.

All this was of itself strange; but there was something yet more unaccountable in the effect that it had upon Sophron himself. Every day his step grew lighter, and his countenance more full of joy. The look of depression and anxiety which during the days of his abundance he had at times worn, was now never seen upon his brow. One would have imagined that it was not his wealth, but some heavy burthen that had been taken away from him; he became so light and cheerful under its removal.

When questioned as to the cause of this, he would sometimes answer by a smile, sometimes by a tear; and there were those who said that, though the smile of Sophron never failed to make the heart rejoice, his tear was yet more full of gladness than his smile.

The young merchant was really poor. The cause of his poverty, like the rest of his history, was buried in obscurity; but, whatever became of his money, it did not, like that of Euprepes, keep returning to him again. The praise of men never gilded his deeds of self-sacrifice, neither did earthly glory shed its brightness upon his path.

All Go Through the Eastern Gate.

And yet, after all, his lowly dwelling was not without its beautiful legend. There were some who could tell how, in the dim twilight, or in the still hour of night, they had seen the train of Royal Messengers moving steathily from his door. They were not arranged in ranks, like those sent by Euprepes. Every individual walked alone. And yet it was clear that all formed part of the same long procession, for each had his left hand muffled closely in his garments, while with the right he pointed to the East to mark the direction of his journey. Slowly and silently, one by one, they moved onward through the least frequented streets of the city. Not a footfall was heard as they passed along.

At length they reached the Eastern gate. It was closed against them, but, like a long line of shadows, the procession still continued its unswerving course, and, passing straight through the opposing barrier, were lost in the darkness beyond.

These things were not, indeed, reported

FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY, OF HEAVENLY BIRTH,
BESTOW THE RICHEST BLESSINGS KNOWN TO EARTH.

publicly in the city. Few of the wealthy merchants had heard them at all, and fewer still believed them. Those who witnessed them felt their voices hushed by the solemnity of the scene. Its silence seemed, as it were, to rest upon them; and they could only whisper of it from ear to ear, or meditate upon it quietly in their own homes.

And when they asked themselves with a thrill of eager interest, whither that long procession had gone, a voice within them would reply, "It is gone far, far beyond the boundaries of the city,—the barriers were unable to arrest its progress,—and it now bears the treasures of Sophron to the distant Palace of the Great King."

Enchanting Music.

Such was the legend: but there is one part of it which yet remains to be told. It was said that when the few who had witnessed the secret procession, returned to the street in which the merchant lived, they perceived his doorway to be strewed with pearls, while an amber light shone around his dwelling, and strains of gentle music were heard from within its walls. So soft was that light, that it seemed but to shed its coloring on the surrounding darkness—so quiet that music, that the stillness of the night was unbroken by the sound.

They stood gazing at a distance. They were afraid to venture near, lest, like a scene of enchantment, it should vanish from their view; and there was a fascination in it, which would not suffer them to depart. The eye never grew weary of watching that lovely radiance, nor the ear of listening to that celestial melody.

At length the sun arose, and then the vision passed away; or rather, though the soft light and quiet music never ceased to bless the house of Sophron, they could not be seen and heard in the glare and turmoil of the day. The pearls also were no longer visible. There were some, indeed, who fancied they could still perceive them; but when they stooped to gather them, they found only the drops of morning dew which lay upon the ground.

Days, months and years rolled on in the same unvaried course. Philargyr continued to toil and labor, and every hour gathered in fresh riches for his insatiable master. Megacles received early the sentence of Exile, but his tower remained as his memorial in the city. Euprepes still dazzled the eyes of the multitudes by his costly gifts and gorgeous processions. Sophron alone lived a life of obscurity.

The Burden Grows Heavier.

The wealth, the fame and the liberality of the three elder brothers had severally passed into a proverb. Many were the discussions concerning their conduct and character; for in spite of the contempt in which Philargyr was generally held, even he had his tribe of flatterers and partisans, and it was remarked that their number increased as the time of his banishment drew near.

But no allusion was made to the law of Exile in any of the conversations concerning the brothers. I have already accounted for this silence. Notwithstanding the King's warnings, the citizens for the most part were accustomed to regard Metecia as their last dwelling-place. It seemed as though some heavy mist were resting upon them: and their low range of thought was bounded by the narrow circuit of their own walls.

A protracted sojourn in the city fell to the portion of Philargyr, though the progress of time served only to increase the burthen of his servitude. He was carrying a heavy load of gold to the secret mine, and toiling

and groaning beneath its weight, when the old man met him on his way. For a moment he gazed steadfastly on the weary merchant, and then with a smile of bitter irony offered to relieve him. Philargyr trembled.

He endeavored at first to persuade himself that it was but a re-appearance of the same image which he had seen in the mirror; but his limbs tottered, and his check grew pale, and there was a numbness at his heart, which convinced him that the actual form of the old man now stood before him, and he could not doubt the nature of the message which he bore.

At length, in much terror and perplexity, and scarcely conscious of the meaning of his own words, he thus addressed him: "Stranger," he cried, "if, indeed, thou art charged with the sentence of Exile, leave me yet a little while. I have great treasure in this city. Wait till my camels and asses are laden, and my slaves with their bags of gold are ready to accompany us, and then we will hasten on our journey."

He Loses All His Wealth.

But the stranger replied—and the cold, stern accents fell as ice on the heart of Philargyr: "O merchant, what vain words are these! You know well that whoever travels with me travels alone. Your camels and asses, your slaves, your silver, and your gold cannot accompany us. The wealth that you have sent beforehand to the Royal Palace is now your own; but all that remains in the city is lost to you forever."

Then did the vision in the mirror rise in distinct and fearful remembrance to the mind of Philargyr. It was but mockery to speak to him of treasure sent beforehand to the Royal Palace. The accumulated gains of his many years of labor were all stored up in the fatal mine. He had counted them over but yesterday; not a single coin was missing—all were there.

Now, as he thought of this, he turned his eyes imploringly to the old man; but in a moment he again averted his gaze, for he perceived him to be no longer alone. A dark and terrible crowd of attendants were ranged around. They were armed with scourges of iron, which they raised on high, as though ready at any moment to drive him forth into the dreary wilderness that lay beyond the city.

A Plea for Pity.

At length he cried out, in accents of mingled fear and remorse, "Alas! O stranger, hitherto I have neglected your warning. The whole of my wealth is still within the city. But, surely, you yourself are a King's Messenger! Have compassion, then, upon me, and even now bear it quickly to the Royal Palace."

But the old man replied, "You ask what cannot be. I am indeed a King's Messenger, but I bear no treasure with me to the Royal Palace; for all things change at my touch, and crumble into decay. Those charged with that office have been with you long ago,—the poor, the afflicted, and the infirm;—they would have conveyed your riches thither, if you had not driven them empty-handed from your door."

Darker and more terrible grew the train of the old man's followers, as Philargyr listened to these fearful words. Once more the iron scourges were raised on high; but the unhappy merchant, in a voice of the deepest misery, implored the respite of a single day.

"To-morrow," he said, "to-morrow all shall be in readiness. I will even now summon the King's Messengers, and send the whole of my wealth beyond the walls of the city. Spare me, if it be but for a few

hours. Your coming was unlooked for, and therefore it has found me unprepared."

"It is false," replied the old man, sternly. "My coming has been very slow and gradual. During the still hours of the night, you heard, one by one, the sound of my footsteps, while I was yet at a distance from the city. Your limbs grew feeble, and your hair gray, and your heart dull and cold; and you knew well that these signs preceded the approach of the last Messenger of the Great King. Each warning made you struggle for a little while, to separate yourself from your gold. But it held you in bonds; and you could not set yourself free. If I were to leave you now, the result would be the same. You would go on clinging to your riches, or rather they would go on clinging to you, even if you were suffered to remain whole centuries in the city."

A Chain of Gold Around His Hands.

Philargyr felt that the old man's words were but too fearfully true. He had for many years been expecting the bearer of the Royal Mandate. So slow had been his approach, that days, weeks, and months seemed to mark the interval of each succeeding step. Time had been thus allowed for the gradual removal of all his wealth. The appointed Messengers had repeatedly called for it; but after a faint effort to give it them, he had sent them away till the morrow.

And the cause of this was, as I have said, the chain of gold which had been twined round his hands by the spirit of the mine. It had been light and fragile once, but it was a magic chain, which grew more firm and massive with the lapse of years. The time had been, when the captive, by one vigorous struggle, might have set himself free. But each weak and unsuccessful effort served only to increase its strength; and the links had become so firmly riveted, that his own hand was all too feeble to dissolve them now.

The unhappy merchant had, as we have seen, long bent beneath the weight of this chain; but he now perceived it for the first time as it was wrenched asunder by the iron grasp of the stranger's hand, and in a moment he was parted for ever from his vast wealth, and, while the scourges fell heavily upon him, driven forth as an exile beyond the walls of the city.

The Day of Exile Arrives.

We will now leave Philargyr, and bring to a close the story of Megacles. A no less sad and fearful picture awaits us there. He was, as I have said, summoned early, and the day of his exile followed close on the warning of the wayfaring man. But I have thought it better to make no change in the order of his history.

The old man found him in all the fulness of his strength. He was arrayed in purple and costly apparel, and stood gazing with an eye of pride on the tower which he had raised. A crowd of eager partisans were gathered around. The bearer of the Royal Mandate passed through the midst of them, with a slow and silent step; and his finger had long pointed to Megacles, before he himself became aware of his approach. It was the looks of those who stood around which first warned him that the day of his exile had arrived.

No sooner, however, did he become conscious of the old man's presence, than he endeavored to face him with an undaunted air. "Stranger," he said boldly, "your summons to me is vain. I ask no dwelling-place in the Glorious City. Here, in Metecia, have I built myself a tower; and here, in Metecia, shall be my lasting home."

There was a shout of applause from the

NOT FOR A CROWN WILL THIS POOR WORLDING PAUSE,
BUT WASTES HIS LIFE IN GATHERING STICKS AND STRAWS.

surrounding multitude; but the old man neither spoke nor moved. Coldly and steadfastly he gazed upon the merchant, until the proud spirit of Megacles quailed beneath his look, and the boastful words seemed to wither on his lips, while every limb was shaken with convulsive terror.

He turned away his face from the unwelcome Messenger, and endeavored to gather new courage from the contemplation of his tower of Fame. But there was a haze which now encircled it; it appeared to be already fading in the distance; and he could hardly distinguish the building itself from its long dark shadow which rested upon the ground.

At length the old man broke the silence:—"It is ever thus, O merchant!—the objects in this city become, for the most part, the same with their shadows, when I approach them. But take my glass, and you will once more behold distinctly the building that you have raised."

The Moth and Worm.

As he said this, he held out a glass to Megacles. The merchant took it, almost unconsciously. For a moment he looked through it, and then, with a cold shudder, suffered it to fall from his hand. His lofty tower had dwindled into a sepulchre, when seen through the glass which the stranger had given him. But diminutive as it now appeared, there was an inscription engraved distinctly upon it; and he had read only too plainly these fatal words:—"Here lie the garments which Megacles once wore."

"Yes," said the old man, with a smile of scorn, "it is not for yourself that you have raised this lofty tower, but for the garments which you wear! They shall remain in the city, and rest beneath it, until the moth and worm have eaten them away. But for yourself you have prepared no dwelling-place, and you will be driven forth a homeless wanderer in the wilderness."

The last feeling of self-confidence now died away from the heart of Megacles. Instead of the crowd of eager partisans, he saw only the same gloomy attendants which afterwards appeared to Philargyr. He felt that his tower would avail him nothing; and that, if the gates of the Royal City were closed against him, no hope of safety could remain.

The past rose in bitter remembrance before him; and, as he thought over the numerous workmen that he had employed on his building, he tried to recollect some one among the number who might prove to have been a Messenger of the Great King.

The effort, however, was vain; and the secret feeling of his heart belied his words, as he advanced a claim to treasure in the Royal Palace. "Stranger," he said, "I have not altogether neglected the warning which you gave. My riches are not buried in a mine; I have dispersed them far and near, and know not whither they are gone. Some perhaps may have remained within the city, but surely some portion must have escaped beyond its walls. If the King's Messengers came to me they received their share with the rest: I never wilfully drove them away. Oh, tell me, then, that there is some treasure prepared for me in the Royal Palace, and that the gates of the Glorious City will not be closed against me for ever!"

What the Old Man Said.

But the old man pointed to the tower as he replied, "Behold, Megacles, the one only monument of your wealth; it is there, and there alone, that all who received your wages or your gifts deposited their burthens. You yourself never failed to point it out to them as the object of their journey."

"But neither is this all; the King's Messengers, though you knew them not, did indeed come to you among the rest. They were weak and helpless, and you loaded them with vast blocks of marble and granite which they were unable to bear. Many sank beneath their burthens; others were crushed and maimed by stones failing from the building. It is true that their groans and lamentations never reached you. They were drowned by the noise and tumult which accompanied the erection of your tower. But the cries of the King's Messengers are carried by each passing wind to the Royal Palace, and are heard and remembered there."

A Strange Darkness.

Megacles would fain have replied, but no time was allowed him for further words. The stranger touched him with his icy hand, and in an instant the dark attendants had stripped him of his raiment, and driven him with their scourges from the city. There were few who wept for his sudden departure, for Megacles was not loved; but his admirers and partisans gathered up his purple garments, and deposited them carefully beneath the tower. In a little while the moth and the worm had consumed them there; while the tower itself continued to stand for many years,—a vain memorial of the spot where they had been laid.

Euprepes saw the sentence of exile passed on both his elder brothers, and spoke with much eloquence of the misery of their fate. For himself, he said that he had long since been fully prepared to depart; all his treasures had been sent before him to the Royal Palace; and he was only anxious for the time when they would be restored to him again. Sometimes he would complain to his friends of the long delay of the bearer of the Royal Mandate, and declare that he was even then listening for his footstep, and would advance to welcome him at the first warning of his approach.

The stranger tarried long; but when he did come, the reality proved very different from the anticipations of Euprepes. In spite of himself, he was conscious of a sensation of fear. First a strange darkness seemed to fall on the objects around him. Then doubts and misgivings flitted like shadows across his mind; and the vision of the future as well as of the past and present was arrayed in less bright coloring than before.

He advanced to meet the old man, but it was with the unsteady step of one walking in a mist; he addressed him in bold words of welcome, but it was with a faltering voice, as though he felt doubtful of the reply.

"At length," he said, "thou hast arrived! But wherefore didst thou tarry so long? Was it that thy journey was delayed by the frequent train of Messengers that met thee on thy way? They were bearing my silver and my gold, my jewels and my merchandise, to the Great Monarch whom thou servest. I have much wealth laid up for me in his Palace. Come, then, let us hasten thither."

A Question and a Reply.

But the old man offered no reply; he merely fixed his cold, searching gaze upon the merchant; and while he did so, it seemed as though some terrible object rose up between them; and the shadow fell yet more darkly on the mind of Euprepes. He tried in vain to suppress his feelings of anxiety and alarm; they kept following one another like the waves of a troubled sea. At length he was forced to give way to them, and once more spoke to the old man, but with words of less confidence than before.

"Stranger," he said, "from whence is this sensation of secret terror? I had looked to your coming as a time of sunshine and joy. Where are the good tidings that you have in store for me? Do not imagine that, like Megacles and Philargyr, I have neglected your warning. My wealth has been distributed among the King's Messengers. Week after week, in long procession, they left my door. Surely, surely, you must have seen many bags of gold and bales of merchandise in the Royal Palace, with the name of Euprepes written upon them!"

The old man replied, or rather, perhaps, though the words seemed to come from him, it was the thoughts of Euprepes which made answer to themselves:

"O merchant! from the city in which you dwell to the land inhabited by the Great King is a long and dangerous journey. It is true that many a Messenger has of late trodden it in safety, and rich and precious were the burthens which they bore. But a simple cross was the only mark either on the bags of gold or the bales of merchandise. If, therefore, the name of Euprepes was written upon yours, the whole of them must have been lost."

The Riches Did Not Arrive.

"Lost! lost!" exclaimed the unhappy man, in a voice of agony; "nay, it cannot be. The embassies were so frequent and numerous that some, at least, must have arrived: and even if it be otherwise, the whole city is a witness that I sent them. The air was rent with acclamations as they passed along; and far and near you could hear the voices of those who cried, 'This is the wealth of Euprepes, which he sends before him to the distant Palace of the Great King.'"

"It is not such sounds as those," replied the old man, "which ever reach the Royal Palace; they are lost in the din and tumult of the city, or heard only by the enemies of the King. But tell me, Euprepes, are you a merchant, and do you not know that those riches are moved most securely which are sent in secrecy and silence? If you had wished merely to transfer your possessions to a house in a neighboring street, should you, in the first instance, have paraded them before your door, and told the bearers to display them openly to all who met them on their way? Surely, if you had done this, and they had been intercepted by thieves and robbers, the fault would have been your own."

Euprepes could make no reply; and yet he murmured something of a hope that the soldiers of the Great King would not have suffered the Messengers to be plundered on their journey.

The Enchanter Pride.

But the old man, in a sterner voice, thus continued to address him:

"I will tell you, Euprepes, what has become of your wealth. There is an enchanter that dwells in this city; his name is Pride, and he is an enemy of the Great King. He it was who sent the herald to summon the Messengers to your door. The sound of his trumpet never fails to change the purest gold and silver into brass and glittering tinsel. These were the offerings that you really sent; but even these did not reach the destination for which you intended them. The enchanter wove his magic circles round the feet of your Messengers, so that they followed one another in the same endless track, without ever advancing one step upon their journey."

A new and fearful light now burst upon the mind of Euprepes. He remembered how, in the visions of the night, he had con-

PRIDE DECKS ITSELF, BUT SOON THE CHARMS ARE PAST,
AND TO A SKELETON IT COMES AT LAST.

tinually seen the long processions moving round and round. Never for a moment had he lost sight of them in the distance, or formed a wish to trace their course beyond the city.

Alas! in these dreams he had seen but the image of his actual Messengers, though it was the enchanter who placed before his eyes the glass in which they appeared. His head grew dizzy, and his heart sick, as they rose to his remembrance; but he still made one last effort to lay claim to a recompense from the Great King.

"It was gold," he said,—"it was pure gold that I gave; and though it may have been changed and rendered worthless, to me at least it was of real value. If it failed to purchase for me an inheritance in the Royal Palace, it surely ought to have been restored to me again. Philargyr hoarded his vast wealth; Megacles built with his a tower of Fame; mine alone has been unprofitably spent, and brought me no recompense within the city, and yet none beyond its walls."

He Had His Reward.

"Merchant," replied the old man, "you know well that you have long since had your reward. The applause of your fellow-citizens fell like a golden shower upon your path; and their goodwill and gratitude have been to you as bales of costly merchandise.

"It was thus that the wealth which you professed to give never ceased to come back to you again. Like Philargyr, you did but traffic with your possessions, and they brought you in a full and abundant return. Your tower, also, like that of Megacles, is built within the city. It is true that your own hands have not labored in its erection, but day by day you have stood watching it in secret, and listened to the shouts and acclamations which marked its growth.

"It may, perhaps, have seemed to you to be rising afar off in the territory of the Great King; but this delusion was caused by the same enchanter who sent you the herald. He spread a mist before your eyes, which made an object appear to be in the distance which was really near at hand. Your range of sight has never passed beyond the boundaries of the city; every hope and wish of your heart has been confined within it, and there also was your treasure and your home."

Then did the attendants with the iron scourges seize upon Euprepes, and strip him of his garments; and he, too, was driven forth into the dreary wilderness. But the scourgers were unseen by those who witnessed his departure, neither could they hear the fearful words in which the sentence of exile was conveyed.

And so it was, that, after he was gone, the long train of his Messengers continued to parade the streets; while the false herald with the golden trumpet proclaimed far and near that the happy exile had been received within the gates of the Glorious City, and that all his treasures had been restored to him there.

Story of the Fourth Brother.

Such was the fearful history of the three elder brothers. It is a relief to turn aside from it, and seek a resting-place in Sophron's lowly dwelling. He had wept bitterly for their exile, but he did not, like Euprepes, make a display of his compassion, or boast of his own readiness to depart. His tears had flowed in secret, and his hopes also were cherished in the solitude of his own bosom.

Every day he put his little room in readiness for the stranger's coming, and was so constantly preparing for it that he may be almost said to have lived in his immediate

presence. Yet he, like the rest, was conscious of some change of feeling when his actual summons arrived.

He was at the time enjoying the quiet beauty of the evening hour. It mattered not that a vase with a few autumnal flowers was the only ornament of his humble abode; and that the flame burnt faint and feebly in the solitary lamp which was standing at their side.

Sophron could not really be in darkness, poverty, or alone; for, as the shades of night closed in, the pearls appeared upon the threshold, the soft music spoke to him as a companion, and the amber light shed its radiance around. His heart was full of gratitude for these blessings, when a mingled feeling of awe and sadness stole upon him, and it seemed as though some shadow were moving along the wall.

The Royal Palace and City.

Every object changed as the dark outline fell upon it;—the flame of the solitary lamp burned even more dimly than before, and the autumnal flowers began to wither and decay. It needed not these signs to warn Sophron that it was the same figure that had appeared in the mirror. For a while he watched it with a calm and steadfast gaze: presently a sensation of weariness stole upon him, his thoughts grew confused and indistinct, and at length he sank in a state of partial unconsciousness upon the ground.

When he again opened his eyes, the old man was standing at his side. No gloomy attendants were near, but he held a mirror in his hand. Beneath it were the words: "This is the image of the Past." The scene which it reflected was one that had been long familiar to Sophron, and he did not shrink from beholding it now.

From time to time soft shadowy forms moved across the glass; they were, doubtless, the images of the King's Messengers; but the eye of Sophron did not for a moment rest upon them, for ever as they appeared his thoughts wandered to the Royal Palace and Glorious City.

At length the old man addressed him. "Oh, merchant," he said, "how is this? All signs of wealth and luxury are wont to vanish at my presence, but it is not so with thy abode. Even as I crossed the threshold of thy door, pearls of inestimable value were scattered upon the ground. They can be no part of the treasure of this city; for, when I trod silently upon them, they were not sullied by my step, but only shone with a purer brightness than before!"

"Stranger," replied Sophron, "I cannot tell. You say truly that they are no part of the treasure of the city. The whole of my father's vast wealth could not have purchased one of them. They are as pearls of the far East, and I have looked upon them as gifts from the Great King; but I know not what hand has scattered them thus plenteously at the threshold of my door."

The Poor Widow.

He had hardly finished speaking, when a shadowy form moved across the mirror, and there was a voice from thence which said, "I was a widow, poor and destitute, but a Messenger of the Great King. I went to Philargyr for relief, and he told me that his money was his own. I came to Sophron, and he spoke soft words of comfort, and ministered to my wants, and bade me take freely of his treasures, for it was for my sake that the Great King had placed them in his hands. I wept with joy and gratitude when I left him; and each tear has been changed by the Great King into a pearl, and remained to this hour on the threshold of his abode."

And the old man said, "Oh, merchant, from whence is this wonderful melody that I hear? Sure I am that none of the musicians in this city could produce such strains. Their harps lose their tunefulness, and their sweetest notes become harsh and discordant, when I am standing near. But this music has some magic power. My presence only renders it more distinct and perfect than before, and even my own voice is moved into harmony by the sound."

Music From a Distant Land.

"Stranger," replied Sophron, "I cannot tell. You say truly that the music has a magic power, for it lends its own tunefulness to all around. To me it has long since breathed a spirit of harmony over the din and discord of this crowded city; every care and anxiety has been changed and modulated by its soothing influence: and the events of day after day have seemed to flow on in perpetual melody. But though the music has thus dwelt in my own home, and I have loved it, and listened to it with gladness, I believe it to be but the echo of a yet sweeter strain which is played afar off in some distant land."

Again there was a voice from the mirror; its accents were low and tremulous, like those of a little child, and it said, "I was an orphan, weak and friendless, but a Messenger of the Great King. I went to Megacles for succor, and he pointed to a block of marble, and bade me raise it on high: but my hands were too feeble for the task; and then his attendants drove me away, and said there was no place for little children in the tower of Fame.

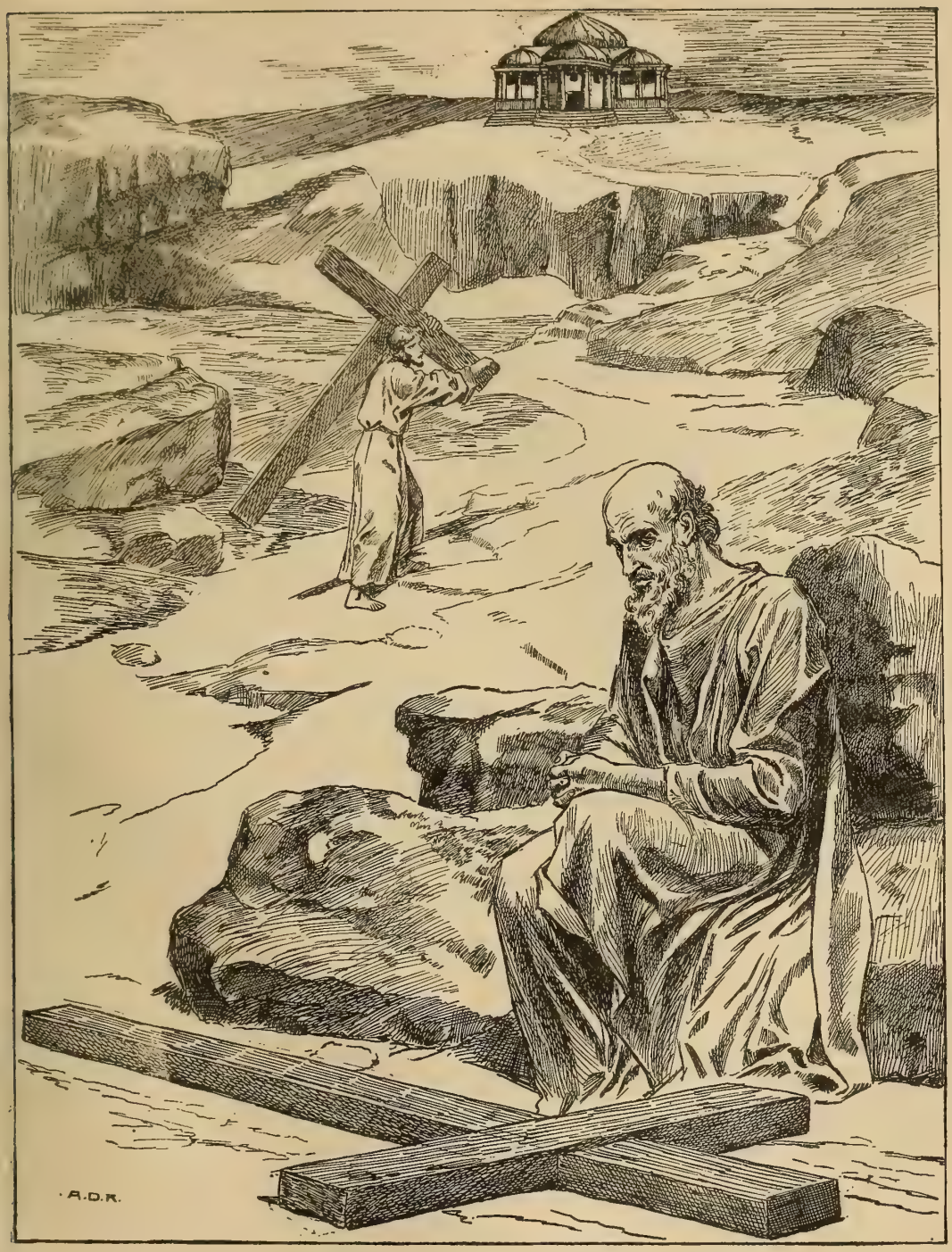
"I came to Sophron; and he fed me and clothed me, and told me that the house in which he lived had been lent to him as a shelter for the orphan child. Every morning and evening I went in secret to the Great King, and carried with me each precious gift that I received from Sophron; and he bade me take back to him in return the offering of a simple heart overflowing with gratitude and love. So it was that my looks and words became to his home as a perpetual song; and this is the soft music which you hear within its walls."

And the old man said, "Tell me, Sophron, from whence is this light that sheds its radiance on all around? Sure I am that it belongs not to this city; for night has thrown her dark mantle over its streets, and, even if it were otherwise, mists and chilling darkness are the signs of my approach. The flame of your own lamp grew more faint and feeble when my shadow first fell upon it, and is fast expiring now. Whence, then, is it that in thy dwelling there seems to be perpetual day?"

The Strange Light.

A soft slumber was stealing upon Sophron; his eyes were already closed; his voice was indistinct, and yet it sounded like happy music as for the last time he replied, "Stranger, I cannot tell. The light has indeed shone upon me; nay, is shining upon me now. My eyes are closed, and I see it not; but it is as the sunshine of the heart, and I feel it to be here. Whether it be a reality or a beautiful dream, I am conscious of its psesence, though I know not from whence it comes."

Then, for the third time, a voice proceeded from the mirror, as a shadowy form moved across it, and it said, "I had been rich and prosperous, but a long sickness brought me into poverty and distress. I heard the proclamation of Euprepes, and made a feeble effort to reach his door; but the crowd, and the glare, and the noise of the trumpet, over-



ONE BEARS THE CROSS, THE OTHER LAYS IT DOWN—
WHICH OF THE TWAIN WILL WIN THE GOLDEN CROWN?

whelmed me with fear and shame. I shrank back in silence, and hid myself in the obscurity of my own solitary dwelling.

"Sophron sought me out and found me there. He tended me in my sickness and ministered to my wants, and bade me be of good cheer, for I had a secret store of wealth, even the prayers and blessings of a poor man; and, when I spoke to him of gratitude, he asked me to give him some portion of my treasure.

"Then did I remember that poverty and distress had made me a Messenger of the Great King, and I hastened to the Royal Palace, and took with me thither my blessings and my prayers. The Great King received them from me, and shed them as rays of unchanging sunshine on the abode of Sophron, and from thence comes the amber light that yet lives within its walls."

A Good Bargain.

There was a pause of a few seconds; while Sophron appeared to be yielding more and more to the soothing influence of sleep.

And then the old man breathed softly upon him, and said, "Thrice happy merchant! Well, indeed, hast thou traded with thy wealth! Thou has bartered thy perishable silver and gold for the widow's gratitude, the orphan's love, and the poor man's prayer. Now that thou art going hence, these riches will follow thee. The costly pearls, the gentle music, and the amber light shall attend thee on thy journey even to the gates of the Glorious City. But a more abundant treasure, a more perfect harmony, and a light of brilliance unutterable, await thee there."

A Smile of Gladness.

As he thus spoke, he placed a second mirror before the eyes of Sophron; and though they now seemed to be sealed in slumber, a smile of joy and gladness played across his countenance. I cannot tell how bright and glorious was the vision that he saw. This alone I know, that the image of the Future was reflected in that glass, and that, as the old man held it, his own form faded away. For a moment there was a sound as of the rustling of many wings in the air, and then all was stillness in the dwelling of Sophron.

On the morrow, the sun shone brightly upon the city;—there was the usual hum of traffic and moving to and fro of the busy multitude in the streets, though the lamp had been extinguished in Sophron's abode, and the aged merchant was gone.

Very few of the passers-by noticed the deserted dwelling; but the King's Messengers wept as they beheld it at a distance, and there was a strain of sadness in the gentle music of the orphan child. They mourned, because their own office was at an end; but when they thought of Sophron, their sorrow was turned into joy. They knew that his treasures had been marked with the Cross, and were stored up for him in the Royal Palace, and that he himself was dwelling in the happy city where the law of Exile was unknown.

CHAPTER III.

IT was Mr. Mertoun who related the foregoing Allegory, and the occasion of it was what happened one day after he had been doing some missionary work. "Has any one called during my absence?" inquired Mr. Mertoun of his nephew, Leonard, on returning home after his usual round of visits to the poor.

"No one," replied the boy; "I have been with Mary in the garden, and if they had, I could not have helped seeing them."

"It is strange," said Mr. Mertoun; "are you quite sure there has been no one?"

"Quite sure," he answered, but presently added, correcting himself, "at least, no one of any consequence—only some poor man."

The tone in which the last words were uttered, no less than the answer itself, grated harshly on Mr. Mertoun's ear. "*Only some poor man!*" he repeated: "why, Leonard, do you say *only?* Might not *his* visit be of consequence?"

The boy looked coufused, but endeavored to justify his former reply by saying, "Of consequence to himself, uncle, but I meant of no consequence to you."

"Nay, my dear boy;" replied Mr. Mertoun, "you now speak even more thoughtlessly than before. It could not have been the one without being the other also. Remember, that it can never be of more importance for the poor man to declare his wants that it is for those who have the means to relieve them. Do you think you understand me?"

"I believe, uncle, I do," he replied thoughtfully. "You mean, as you told us on Sunday, that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Mr. Mertoun perceived from the reply, that he had awakened the train of reflection which he wished, and did not, at the time, pursue the conversation. But the words, "*only some poor man,*" kept recurring painfully to his own mind. His nephew and niece had been with him but a few days, yet it was not the first time he had observed in them a want of sympathy for the poor. This was, perhaps, an almost necessary result of their having been brought up in a great city.

The Claims of Poor People.

No opportunities had been there afforded them of visiting the poor in their own homes. They had learned to look upon all beggars as imposters, and drew no distinction between real and pretended cases of distress. Thus, though in other repects they were loving and obedient children, and well grounded in the principles of the Christian faith, the numerous warnings in the Gospel concerning the danger of wealth, and its only safeguard, remained to them almost a dead letter.

It was with a view of remedying this defect, and bringing distinctly before them the important office assigned to the poor by our Blessed Lord, that on the evening of the above conversation their uncle told them the foregoing story.

The young people were much interested and listened very attentively. A silence of some minutes succeeded the story. Both the

children were grave aud thoughtful. Leonard looked anxious to say something, but seemed to want courage to begin the conversation. To relieve him from his embarrassment, Mr. Mertoun addressed himself in the first instance to Mary."

"Tell me, Mary," he said, "do you suppose there ever was a city with the same singular law as that of Metecia?"

"Oh yes, uncle," she replied readily; "I guessed at once what you intended by it; the story is an allegory, and the law of Exile is the law of Death."

"It is so," said Mr. Mertoun. "The whole world is but our city of Metecia. We are liable, at any moment, to be called upon to depart from it; and, when our summons comes, we go forth alone, and no part of our possessions follow us. If we live in forgetfulness of this law, our conduct is, to say the least, as unaccountable as that of the merchants in the story. But what do you understand by the vision in the mirror?"

Blessings of Bereavement.

Mary hesitated, and Leonard answered for her, "I suppose, uncle, the thoughts awakened by the death of friends."

"You are right," said Mr. Mertoun; "our seasons of bereavement are those in which we feel most distinctly the nothingness of worldly treasures, and are led to take a true view of our position as pilgrims and sojourners upon the earth. The warnings of Holy Scripture, which we may have often heard and disregarded, are then so forced upon our minds, that we cannot set them aside. But tell me, Leonard, what particular duty connected with the instability of riches is the story designed to illustrate?"

The boy colored as he replied, "The duty of giving to the poor;—and I know why you told it us. But," he added, with some slight hesitation, "I hope you do not think I am like Philargyr?"

"I have seen but little of either you or Mary," answered Mr. Mertoun, "and cannot even tell to which of the three dangerous paths pointed out in the allegory your natural dispositions may incline. But my design in telling it was to bring distinctly before you the important office assigned to the poor in the Gospel. I was afraid that you were unmindful of it when a few days since you used the words, 'Only some poor man.'"

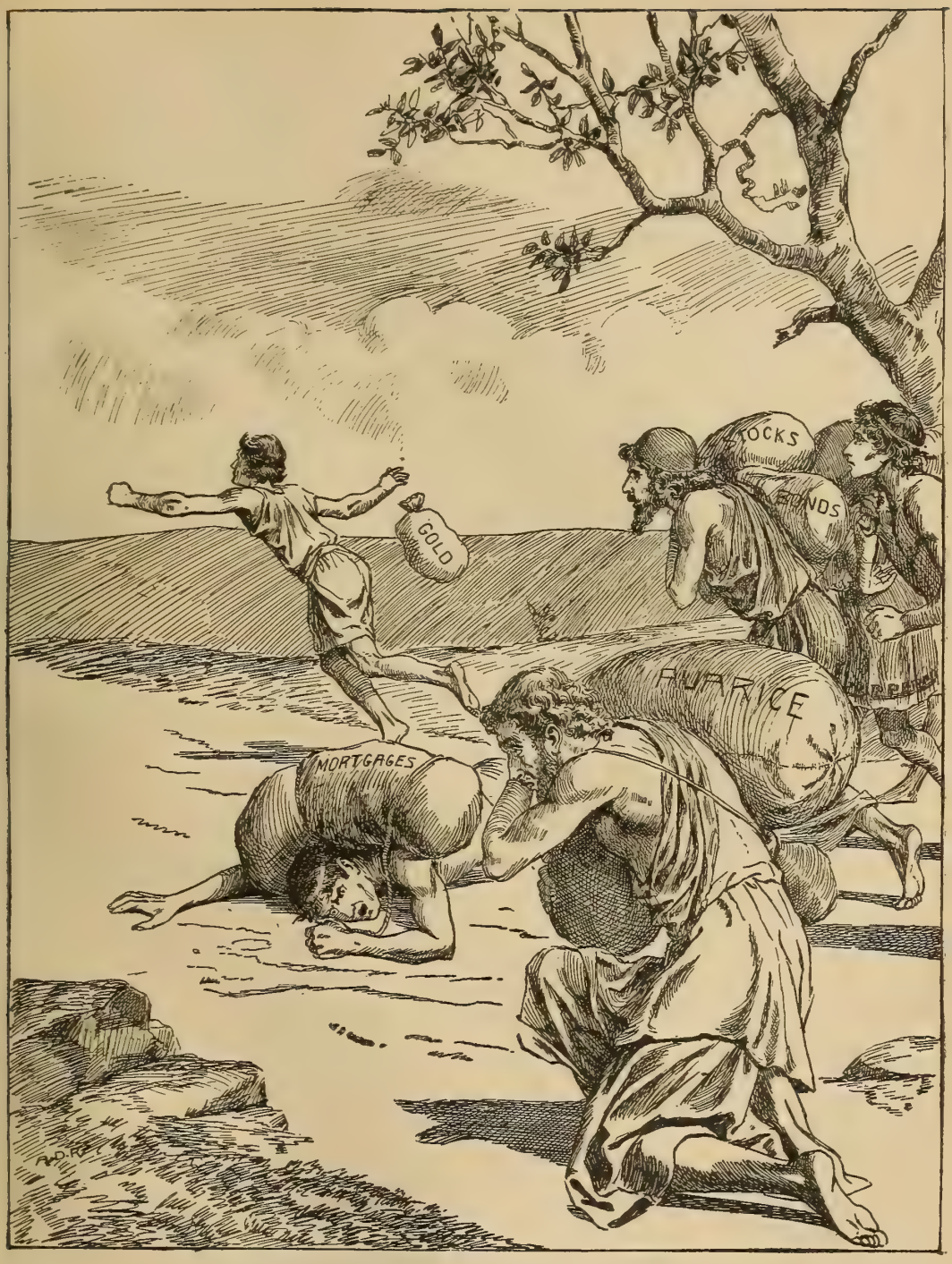
Misuse of Money.

"I was, indeed," he answered; "and for the future, I will try to look upon the poor as Messengers of the Great King. But, uncle," he continued, after a pause, "do you mean that all who neglect almsgiving are like some one or other of the merchants in the story?"

"I think," replied Mr. Mertoun, "that all who abuse their riches, may be comprehended under the three great classes that I have described. First, we have those like Philargyr, who do not spend them at all: next, those like Megacles, who spend them, but not on proper objects: and lastly, those like Euprepes, who spend them, and on proper objects, but not with a proper motive."

"It was not quite that which I intended to ask," said Leonard. "Is it not possible to be partly like one and partly like another?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Mertoun; "I have in the story purposely kept the lines clear and distinct, in order to trace the course of each separately. But in actual life they often seem to cross one another, and without careful self-examination we cannot tell to which path even we ourselves may be inclining. There is, however, a yet more



WHO CARRY LUGGAGE WILL BE SURE TO FIND
THAT IN THE RACE THEY'RE SADLY LEFT BEHIND.

important difference between actual life and the allegory. The merchants are represented only as the possessors of great wealth, and with the single duty of almsgiving. Is that a complete view of our positions as Christians?"

How to Bestow Charity.

"Oh no," replied Mary; "you said, when you explained to us the Parable of the Talents, that our health, our time, our affections, and the events of our daily life, all form part of the Talents for which we shall have to account."

"They do," said Mr. Mertoun; "and the Talent of Wealth, though distinct from the rest, never in actual life stands apart from them. The exercise of it must be kept in harmony with the discharge of our other duties. The amount and manner of our alms should depend, not merely on our means, but on the circumstances in which we are placed. It may be laid down as a general rule, that the wish to give, and to give without ostentation, should be a moving principle with all alike; but in each particular instance it will be controlled and limited by a variety of events that it is impossible to define. There is yet another omission in the allegory."

"Do you mean," asked Leonard, "that the merchants only received a single warning, and went on in the same course to the end of their career?"

"It was not that to which I referred," answered Mr. Mertoun, "though certainly, in that respect also, their supposed case is but an imperfect representation of our own. Each line in the story is brought almost uninterruptedly to an end. In actual life, they may be broken off by God's mercy, and Philargyr, or Megacles, become as Sophron. Still, however, the allegory is a true representation of the course of unrepented sin. The omission of which I speak occurs rather in the history of the youngest brother."

"You mean," said Mary, "that we cannot really lay up for ourselves riches in Heaven, and that all we do is accepted for the sake of our Saviour. But was not that intended by the mark of the cross which was seen on the merchandise?"

"It is implied in it," replied Mr. Mertoun, "but it does not form, so to speak, any distinct feature in the allegory."

"But ought there to be so many omissions in the story?" asked Mary.

He Shows a Picture.

Mr. Mertoun replied, by taking up a drawing which happened to be lying on the table: "Tell me," he said, "do you know of what this is a picture?"

"Of the church," she replied, in some surprise at the question.

"Indeed," said her uncle. "But I do not see the east window, or the north transept, and but very little of the west end of the building. It seems to me that three sides of the church are wanting."

"Of course," answered Mary, as she partly guessed his meaning, "it must be so, for the view is taken from the south."

"So, Mary," said Mr. Mertoun, "the view of life in the story is necessarily taken from one particular point. It looks upon it, as it were, towards the side of wealth. There are other sides no less important to the symmetry of the building, but they cannot all be introduced into the same picture. I have yet another question to ask:—Do you suppose that the person who sketched this drawing drew a plan of the foundation of the church before he began it?"

"Nay," replied Mary; "you cannot be serious in asking."

"Well, then," continued Mr. Mertoun,

"in this respect also it is an imperfect picture. The real walls undoubtedly have a foundation, and the building could not stand an instant if it were not there. Do you see my meaning, Leonard?"

"I do," he answered; "you mean, that the death of our Saviour is the foundation on which the walls of our actual life rest; and that, though it be not represented in the story, it is, of course, assumed to be there."

"Exactly so," said Mr. Mertoun; "and I wish you to mark clearly the distinction between this illustration and the former. The several duties of life are like the different walls of the building, which may be brought out in greater or less distinctness, according to the point from which we view it. The doctrine of the atonement is to the Christian as the one foundation on which they rest, and without it the picture could not be really faithful, for the building itself would cease to exist. But to return to the duty of almsgiving. Can you tell me any passage in Holy Scripture in which it is insisted upon to the apparent exclusion of others? You were mentioning, Mary, the Parable of the Talents. Do you remember the description of the Day of Judgment which follows it?"[1]

The Reward of the Merciful.

Mary reflected a moment, and then answered, "Those on the King's right hand were rewarded, because they had fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, and received the stranger."

"They were so," said Mr. Mertoun; "and our Blessed Lord assured them, that inasmuch as they had done this unto one of the least of His brethren, they had done it unto Himself. In like manner, those on the King's left hand are represented as being punished simply for neglect of the poor. There are also two parables concerning rich men, in which the same view is brought no less distinctly before us."

"One of them," said Leonard, "is that of the Rich Man and Lazarus."[1]

"It is so," answered his uncle; "no other sin of the rich man is there pointed out to us but that of neglecting the poor beggar who lay at his door. The other parable to which I referred is that of the Rich Man, who, when his ground brought forth plentifully, determined to hoard the produce.[2] God punished him with the immediate sentence of death. And our Saviour Himself has annexed to it the warning, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.'"

Farthing More Than Riches.

"Children," observed Leonard, "are never very rich."

The words were spoken in a low tone, as though in answer to his own thoughts. His uncle, however, did not let them pass unnoticed. "They are not," he replied, "according to the ordinary meaning of the word wealth.

"But recollect how the mite of the poor widow was pronounced by our Blessed Lord to be more than all the costly gifts which were cast into the treasury by the rich. Now the youngest child may either give a like offering to that of the widow, or he may hoard it up, or spend it on himself."

"And if he does hoard it up," asked Leonard, "will he be like Philargyr?"

"Not, I trust," answered Mr. Mertoun, "such as he was in the end of his career. But his bonds were, at first, light and flexible; it was time that added to them their weight and strength; and such bonds are

[1] St. Matthew xxv. 34, 35.

[1] St. Luke xvi, 19-31. [2] St. Luke xii. 16-21.

often worn in secret by children. They are by no means free from the temptation to avarice. The apparently slight opportunities they have for its indulgence render it less perceptible, but not less dangerous. There is no need of a gold mine to foster it.

"The first trifling coin a child receives is often formed into the first link of the chain that binds him in after years. If it be followed by the love of money for its own sake, and the wish for more, he is already beginning to share the servitude of Philargyr."

The Remedy for Faults.

The children were silent. The words awakened no painful thoughts in Mary, for avarice was not one of her failings. But Leonard felt the full force of his application of the story. The gift which he had received from his uncle the preceding Christmas had been hoarded up in secret, and was loved because it was gold. At length he asked in what way the fault of avarice might be cured.

Mr. Mertoun guessed the motive of the question, and replied, "The best remedy for all our faults, my dear boy, is to make them the subject of continual prayer. But this, perhaps, more than any other, requires the resistance of an immediate effort. The conquering it is really like the breaking of a chain. Once summon resolution to give, and it seems as though some spell were dissolved, and the disposition to give more abundantly will follow.

"I do not mean that the temptation to save will not again come back; but it will return after each defeat with less violence than before, until at length it will be subdued altogether by the habit of giving. You must not, however, forget that the hoarding up our money is not the only abuse of the talent of wealth; the spending it on improper objects is one no less dangerous; and I believe that children in general are more frequently tempted to follow the path of Megacles than that of Philargyr."

"Of Megacles, uncle!" said Mary, in some surprise; "I had fancied that his sin was ambition, and not extravagance."

"It was so," said Mr. Mertoun, "but he may be taken as representing a yet larger class. His history brings especially before us the folly of wasting on some mere earthly object those riches which might be laid up in the treasury of Heaven. To do this is, in reality, extravagance. It matters not, to use the language of the story, whether we build with them mere villas of Pleasure or towers of Fame. Children, who spend what they have on self-gratification to the neglect of the poor, are beginning to follow the course of Megacles."

Love of Finery.

"But can they be also like him in his ambition?" asked Mary.

"Undoubtedly," answered her uncle; "but the ways in which they can purchase this species of self-gratification are so apparently trivial, that you may have some difficulty in tracing the resemblance. Perhaps the spending money on finery or anything else intended to excite the admiration of their companions, is their nearest approach to the particular sin of Megacles. But is it not said at the conclusion of the story, that Euprepes, also, had in secret been raising a tower?"

"It is," answered Mary; "and it means, that while professing to relieve the poor, he was, like Megacles, merely seeking the applause of his fellow-citizens."

"This, then," continued Mr. Mertoun, "is a kind of ambition to which children are peculiarly exposed. There is no way in which they can purchase applause so readily

FALL BACK, THOU MIGHTY FOE, AND BITE THE DUST,
SLAIN BY THE SPIRIT'S SHARP AND DEADLY THRUST.

as by giving to the poor. Each act of benevolence is sure to be accompanied by a certain amount of praise. And yet if they make that the prevailing motive for their gift, they have their recompense upon earth, and will forfeit it in Heaven. Do you remember the warning which our Saviour gave His disciples on this subject?"

"He told them," answered Mary, "that if they did their alms before men, to be seen of them, they would have no reward of their Father in Heaven."

Giving to be Seen of Men.

"Yes," continued Mr. Mertoun, "and He added the precept—'When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.'[1] Is there any difficulty suggested to you by these words?"

"I was wishing to ask," said Leonard, "whether they mean that we are to make a secret of everything that we give."

"They cannot mean that," answered Mr. Mertoun, "for our Lord has also told us to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father Which is in Heaven.[2] By the command, 'not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth,' we must understand, that we ought to shrink even from any feeling of self-satisfaction at our own good deeds, and, of course, yet more to avoid the applause of the world. But we cannot help actually knowing what we ourselves give, and at times it is our duty to let others know it also."

"And yet," observed Mary, "if we do this are we not really giving our alms before men?"

[1] St. Matthew vi. 3, 4. [2] St. Matthew v. 16.

"Yes," replied Mr. Mertoun, "but not necessarily in order to be seen of them. It is the giving with this object that is forbidden by our Blessed Lord. Almsgiving is no easy duty, and children especially require the advice of others in the manner of its performance. They cannot even find out for themselves proper objects of benevolence. They may, therefore, ask to be taught how to give, and place their offerings in the hands of their friends, and yet look for no other recompense than that which is promised to them in Heaven.

"Do you remember, Mary, how, when you were a little child, your mother would come to hear you say your prayers, and yet you did not say them in order to be heard of her: she taught you to pray, but the words were addressed to God. Do you understand me?"

Our Motives Are Known.

"I think so," she replied; "but will there be no difference at all between children who give merely that their friends may praise them and those who give from right motives?"

"Perhaps, at times, there may be no visible difference," answered Mr. Mertoun, "but there must always be a real one. Recollect, that when it is said, 'Which seeth in secret,' it does not mean only that God sees into the secret chamber, but into the secret thoughts of the heart. He can read clearly and distinctly the exact motive of every gift; and as those which profess to be studiously concealed, may in their very concealment proceed from ostentation, so also those which are openly given, may, in his sight, be as the silent offerings of Sophron."

But Mary was not yet quite satisfied. "I know, uncle," she said, "that we must try to be like Sophron in the motive of our alms; but cannot children be in any way like him in the manner of giving them?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Mertoun, "they may be like him in this also, though the resemblance is an imperfect one. They may avoid all unnecessary display; or again, they may conceal what they have already given, or the inward struggle by which the gift is accompanied, or the self-denial which it costs them. All this is as a secret store, which adds to the value of our offerings in the sight of God, if we look for our recompense to him alone.

The Poor Are Sent to Us.

"But it is difficult to lay down any exact rule. The line which, as I have said, is purposely kept distinct and separate in the story, often seems perplexed and difficult, when we try to trace it through the conflicting circumstances of life. I think, however, that you will seldom find any practical difficulty. While we walk along our appointed path, though we cannot see far into the distance, each separate step is for the most part sufficiently clear.

"Only keep distinctly in your remembrance that the poor are sent to you by God —that it cannot be right to hoard up your money, or spend it on your own gratifications, while you do nothing to relieve their wants—and that your offerings must be made for Christ's sake, and without the hope of any earthly recompense—and the story of the King's Messengers will not have been told you in vain. The events of your own daily life will best enable you to apply it to yourselves."

Leonard's Costly Gift.

With the exception of a single question, Leonard had been a silent listener to the close of the conversation. He did not seem to participate in the difficulties of his sister. When, however, the usual time came for the children to retire to rest, he appeared anxious to remain behind; but Mary called him, and he accompanied her.

Mr. Mertoun was left alone. He had seen that the child was impressed by the story, but his joy at this circumstance was checked by the remembrance that in a little while the feelings awakened by it would pass away. His thoughts were interrupted by a light footstep at the door; the handle was softly turned, and Leonard entered alone. There was something in his hand which glittered, and this he gave his uncle, with a few whispered words.

The tear rose to Mr. Mertoun's eyes, as he replied, "God bless you, my dear nephew; you have indeed found out the true moral to my story. Go on as you have begun, and your path will be clear." The offering which the boy gave was the long-hoarded gold; and the whispered words were, "For the Messenger of the Great King who came this morning to your door."

THE OLD MAN'S HOME.

CHAPTER I.

N THE coast of the Isle of Wight there is a scene with which I have long since become familiar, but which never fails to exercise a soothing influence on my mind. It is at the eastern extremity of the landslip. Large portions of the cliff have fallen away, and formed a dell so broken and irregular, that the ground has the appearance of having at one time been agitated by an earthquake.

But Nature has only suffered the convulsion to take place, in order that afterwards she might bestow her gifts upon this favored spot with a more unsparing hand. The wild and picturesque character of the landscape is now almost lost sight of in its richness and repose. The new soil is protected from the storms of winter by the cliff from which it has fallen, and, sloping towards the south, is open to the full warmth and radiance of the sun.

In consequence of this, the landslip has, as it were, a climate of its own; and often, when the more exposed parts of the country still look dreary and desolate, is in the enjoyment of the blessings of an early spring. Such was the season at which I first visited it. The gray fragments of rock which lay scattered on the ground were almost hid by the luxuriance of the underwood, and countless wild flowers were growing beneath their shade.

Below, the eye rested upon a little bay, formed by the gradual advance of the sea: and all was so calm and peaceful, that as I watched the gentle undulation of the waters, I could fancy them to be moving to and fro with a stealthy step, lest they should disturb the tranquillity of the scene.

I have said that a visit to this favored spot never fails with me to have a soothing influence. I feel as though I were treading on enchanted ground, and the whole scene were allegorical: for it reminds me that, in like manner, the wreck of all our earthly hopes and plans may but lay open our hearts to the influence of a warmer sunshine, and enrich them with flowers which the storms of life have no longer power to destroy. But I cannot now tell whether these thoughts have their origin in the scene itself, or in an incident that occurred the first time I visited it.

The Old Man.

It was on the evening of the 18th of April. I had been long gazing upon it, and had imagined that I was alone, when my attention was arrested by a sigh from some one near me. I turned round and saw a venerable old man seated upon a fragment of the fallen cliff, beneath which the violets were very thickly clustering. His hair was white as silver; his face deeply furrowed, and yet pervaded by a general expression of childish simplicity, which formed a strong contrast to the lines which must have been indented upon it by care and suffering, no less than by the lapse of years.

VAIN EFFORTS THEIRS WHO TRY TO OVERTAKE
THE BUBBLES WHICH, IF CAUGHT, WOULD BREAK.

I cannot recall the words of the chance observation which I addressed to him: but it related to the lateness and inclemency of the season, and I was at once struck by the singularity of his reply. "Yes, yes," he said musingly, "the winter has indeed been very long and dreary: and yet it has been gladdened, from time to time, by glimpses of the coming spring."

I now observed him more closely. There was a strangeness in his dress which first excited my suspicion, and I fancied that I could detect a restlessness in his light blue eye which spoke of a mind that had gone astray. "Old man," I said, "you seem tired; have you come from far?"

His Long Journey.

"Ah, woe is me," he replied, in the same melancholy tone as before; "I have indeed travelled a long and solitary journey; and at times I am weary, very weary; but my resting-place now must be near at hand."

"And whither, then," I asked, "are you going?"

"Home, sir, home," he replied: and while his voice lost its sadness, his face seemed to brighten and his eye grow steady at the thought; "I hope and believe that I am going home."

I now imagined that I had judged him hastily, and that the answers which I had ascribed to a wandering intellect proceeded in truth from depth of religious feeling. In order to ascertain this, I asked: "Have you been long a traveller?"

"Fourscore and thirteen years," he replied; and observing my look of assumed wonder, he repeated a second time, more slowly and sadly than before, "Fourscore and thirteen years."

"The home," I said, "must be very far off that requires so long a journey."

"Nay, nay, kind sir, do not speak thus," he answered: "our home is never far off; and I might perhaps have arrived at it years ago. But often during early spring I stopped to gather the flowers that grew beneath my feet; and once I laid me down and fell asleep upon the way. And so more than fourscore and thirteen years have been wanted to bring me to the home which many reach in a few days. Alas! all whom I love most dearly have long since passed me on the road, and I am now left to finish my journey alone."

His Wife and Children.

During this reply, I had become altogether ashamed of my former suspicion, and I now looked into the old man's face with a feeling of reverence and love. The features were unchanged; but instead of the childish expression which I had before observed, I believed them to be brightened with the heavenliness of the second childhood, while the restlessness of the light blue eye only spoke to me of an imagination which loved to wander amid the treasures of the unseen world.

I purposely, however, continued the conversation under the same metaphor as before. "You have not then," I said, "been always a solitary traveller?"

"Ah, no," he replied: "for a few years a dear wife was walking step by step at my side; and there were little children, too, who were just beginning to follow us. And I was so happy then, that I sometimes forgot we were but travellers, and fancied that I had found a home. But my wife, sir, never forgot it. She would again and again remind me that 'we must so live together in this life, that in the world to come we might have life everlasting.' They are words that I scarcely regarded at the time, but I love

to repeat them now. They speak to me of meeting her again at the end of our journey."

"And have all your children left you?" I asked.

"All, all," he replied. "My wife took them with her when she went away. She stayed with me, sir, but seven years, and left me on the very day on which she came. It seems strange now that I could have lived with them day after day without a thought that they were so near their journey's end, while I should travel onward so many winters alone. It is now sixty years since they all went home, and have been waiting for me there. But, sir, I often think that the time, which has seemed so long and dreary to me, has passed away like a few short hours to them."

The Beautiful Home.

"And are you sure, then," I said "that they are all gone home?" It was a thoughtless question, and I repented the words almost before they were spoken. The tears rose quickly in the old man's eyes, and his voice trembled with emotion, as he replied: "Oh, sir! do not bid me doubt it. Surely, every one of them is gone home; one, at least, of the number is undoubtedly there, and they all went away together, as though they were travelling to the same place; besides, sir, my wife was constantly speaking to them of their home; and would not their journey as well as my own have been prolonged, if their home had not been ready for them? And when I think of them I always think of home; am I not, then, right in believing that all of them are there?"

There were allusions in this answer which I did not at the time understand; but the old man's grief was too sacred for me to intrude further upon it. I felt, also, that any words of my own would be too feeble to calm the agitation which my thoughtless observation had caused. I merely repeated a passage from Holy Scripture in reply: "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors."

The old man's face again brightened, and as he wiped away the tears, he added, "And 'Blessed,' also, 'are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' There is not only a blessing for those who have been taken to their rest, but there is the image of that blessing to cheer the old man who is left to pursue his solitary journey."

A Golden Pathway.

At this moment, the sun, which had been obscured by a passing cloud, suddenly shone forth, and its rays were reflected by a path of gold in the silent waters. The old man pointed to it with a quiet smile: the change was in such harmony with his own thoughts, that I do not wonder at the metaphor it suggested to him. "There," said he, "is the blessing of the mourner! See how it shines down from the Heaven above, and gilds with its radiance the dreary sea of life!"

"True," I replied; "and the sea of life would be no longer dreary, if it were not for the passing clouds which at times keep back from it the light of Heaven." His immediate answer to this observation proved the image, which he had employed, to be one long familiar to his own mind. "There are indeed clouds," he said, "but they are never in heaven; they hover very near the earth; and it is only because our sight is so dim and indistinct that they seem to be in the sky."

A silence of some minutes followed this remark. I was, in truth, anxious that the

PRESUMPTION OFTEN VENTURES QUITE TOO NEAR,
WHERE DANGER SHOULD AWAKEN WHOLESOME FEAR.

old man should pursue the metaphor farther. But the gleam of light passed away as the sun sank behind the western hills. His feelings appeared to undergo a corresponding change, and he exclaimed, hastily, "The day is fast drawing to a close, and the night must be near at hand: I must hasten onward on my journey. Come, kind sir, and I will show you where my friends are waiting for me."

Marks of Chains on His Wrists.

I was wondering whether he now spoke metaphorically or not, when my thoughts were suddenly turned into a new channel, and my former painful suspicions returned. As the old man leant upon his staff, his wrists became exposed to view, and I saw that they were marked with deep blue lines, which could only have been caused by the galling of a chain in former years.

The poor wanderer observed the look I gave them. A sudden flush of shame overspread his countenance, and he hurriedly drew down his garment to conceal them. It was, however, but a momentary impulse; he again exposed them to my view, and he himself gazed sadly upon them as he said, "Why should I try to hide them, when they are left there to remind me constantly of my true condition? For in times past I have borne the pressure of more wearing bonds than those; and though I have been released from them now, no one can tell how dark and deep is the stain that they have left upon the soul." Something more he added, but his eye was turned meekly towards heaven, and it was only from the movement of his lips that I fancied I could trace the words of the prayer, "Though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us."

He now began to move slowly forward. The ground was rough and uneven, and his step so very feeble, that I expected every instant to see him fall. He struck his foot against a stone, and I sprang forward to his assistance. "Thank you, kind sir," he said, in his quiet way; "but do not fear for me: my own frail limbs could not support me for an instant; but I have a staff on which I lean; and though I may stumble at times, I cannot fall."

Again I was in doubt whether to interpret his words literally or not; but my belief now was that the old man almost unconsciously used the language of allegory. Long habit had so taught him to blend together the seen and the unseen world, that he could not separate them. Life was to him a mirror, and in the passing objects of sight and sense he never failed to recognize the images of spiritual things.

Not Used to a Smooth Road.

I thus give the opinion that I formed of the old man from the brief conversation I myself had with him. The following incident cast, as it were, a shadow upon it, and robbed it of its brightness, but did not really alter it. My intercourse with him was brought to a sudden and painful conclusion. It was at my persuasion that he crossed a stile which separated the wild scenery of the landslip from the public road leading to the little village of B——. I thought it would be easier for him to walk along the more beaten track.

He had yielded with apparent reluctance to my request. His unwillingness appeared to proceed from instinct rather than reason. It may in part have arisen from a kind of natural sympathy which attracted him to that wild luxuriant spot; in part from an unconscious dread of the danger to which he

actually became exposed. He simply said, "This smooth way was not made for the like of me, kind sir; but, under your protection, I will venture along it."

Alas! I little thought of the kind of protection he required. We had advanced but a few hundred yards, and had just reached the summit of the hill which commanded the first view of the village church.

He Was Called Crazy.

The old man had paused for a little while, and appeared to gaze upon it with a feeling of the most intense interest; I was afraid even by a passing question to interrupt the quiet current of his thoughts; when the silence was suddenly broken by the creaking of a cart-wheel, which grated harshly on my ear; and almost before I could look round, I heard a voice of rude triumph behind me, crying out, "There he is—there he is—there goes the old boy! Stop him, stop him, sir! he is mad."

I have no heart to describe the scene that followed: the poor wanderer shuffled forward with a nervous hurried step; but in a few seconds the cart was at his side; the driver immediately jumped out, and seizing him by the collar, with many a rude word and coarse jest, tried to force him to enter it.

For a moment, surprise and indignation deprived me of speech, for I had begun to regard the old man with such a feeling of reverent love, that it almost seemed to me like a profanation of holy ground. When, however, he turned his eyes towards me with an imploring look, I recovered myself sufficiently to demand by what authority he dared thus molest an inoffensive traveller on his journey. In my inmost heart I dreaded the answer I should probably receive; neither was my foreboding wrong: the man laughed rudely as he replied, "He has been mad, quite mad, for more than fifty years; he escaped this morning from the asylum, and one of the keepers has been with me all day long scouring the country in search of him."

It was in vain that I sought a pretext for disbelieving the truth of the story. I could not help feeling that it did but confirm a suspicion which, in spite of myself, had kept crossing my own mind: for the bright coloring which was shed by faith on the thoughts and words of the old man was not alone a sufficient evidence that they were under the guidance of reason. Yet, of one thing at least I felt sure, that, whatever were the state of his intellect, it could be no imaginary cause that now so strongly moved him.

My heart bled for him as I listened to the pathetic earnestness with which he implored the protection that I was unable to afford. He even forgot to use the language of metaphor in the agony of his grief.

"Indeed, indeed, sir," he said, "they call me mad, but do not believe them, for I am not mad now. There, there," he added, pointing towards the church, "my wife and children are waiting for me. It was on this very day that they went away, and we have now been parted sixty years. I have travelled very far to join them once again before I die. Oh, have pity upon me! I only ask for one little half-hour, that I may go on in peace to the end of my journey."

Arrival of the Keeper.

Large drops of moisture trembled on his forehead as he uttered these words; his whole face became convulsed with emotion, and he clung with such intensity to my garment, that his rude assailant tried in vain to unloosen his grasp. The man himself was evidently frightened by the agitation which his own violence had caused, and appeared

doubtful how to proceed, when the scene was fortunately interrupted by the arrival of his companion.

He was the keeper who had been sent from the asylum with the cart, but had left it in order to search the pathway which led through the landslip. His look and manner afforded a striking contrast to those of the first comer, who proved to be merely the owner of the vehicle, which had been hired for the occasion. Immediately on his arrival, he reprimanded him for his rude treatment of the old man, and insisted on his returning to the cart, and desisting from all further interference.

My hopes were greatly raised by this, and I flattered myself I should now have little difficulty in obtaining for the poor wanderer the indulgence which he sought. But I soon found my mistake, and, under the irritated feelings of the moment, almost preferred the rude conduct of the first comer to the quiet determination with which his companion listened to my request.

Poor Old Robin.

He merely smiled at the account I gave of my own interview with the old man; and when I suggested that it contained no evidence of insanity, shook his head, and replied, "You do not know poor Robin. His notions about home are the peculiar feature of his madness; but you are not the first person that has been deceived by them."

He spoke in a low tone, as though he was anxious not to be overheard. But the precaution seemed unnecessary: for, though the old man had mechanically retained his grasp on my garments, he was now looking eagerly towards the village church, and I could see, from the expression of his countenance, that his thoughts had passed away from the scene around him.

When I found my arguments of no avail, I changed my ground, and besought as a favor that he would make the trial of letting the old man proceed to the end of his journey, and trust to his promise to return quietly from thence.

"Sir," he replied, in a louder voice, "I should have no more hesitation in trusting the word of poor Robin than your own. He never deceived me; and, under ordinary circumstances, I would at once grant his request; but the hour is late, and as it is, the night will close in upon us before we can get back to the town of N——. The responsibility will rest upon me if mischief should arise from any additional delay. I am sure Robin himself would not desire it."

Treated the Old Man Kindly.

As he said this he turned towards the old man; but his countenance was unchanged, his eye still fixed upon the church, and he either had not heard the words at all, or they had failed to convey any distinct impression to his mind.

After a pause, I again renewed my entreaties, urging that it would at least be a better plan than having recourse to violence, which must eventually produce a far more serious delay.

"Of course," said the attendant, "anything is better than having recourse to violence." "Then," said I, "you accede to my request?" "Only," replied he, with a provoking smile, "in case all other methods fail; but as the delay would be a real inconvenience to us, you must permit me first to try my powers of persuasion. Let me now beg of you, whatever surprise you may feel, to be careful to express none." He again lowered his voice as he said these words, and in spite of the dislike inspired by the self-confidence of his manner, and of other stronger

BASE ERROR SHRINKS AND TREMBLES WITH AFFRIGHT,
WHEN TRUTH DESCENDS, ARRAYED IN HEAVENLY LIGHT.

emotions, my curiosity was excited to know how he would proceed.

He placed himself opposite to the old man, so as to intercept his view of the village, and then, having fixed his eye calmly and steadfastly upon him, with an appearance of real interest, thus soothingly addressed him: "I would gladly go on with you, Robin; but am sure you are under some mistake. Your wife and children cannot be in yonder village—they are not there, they are at home. Come quietly with me now, and perhaps this evening you may go home also."

"They Are at Home."

These simple words touched some hidden chord in the old man's heart, and their effect was almost magical. All other feelings passed away, and I forgot the presence of his companions, as I watched the change which they produced. His features became composed, his hand relaxed its hold, and his voice resumed its former tranquil tone as he slowly repeated: "They are not there, they are at home: they are not there, they are at home. True, very true; they are not there, they are at home."

Presently he raised his eyes to heaven, and the attendants, no less than myself, were overawed by the solemnity of his manner. There was a silence of a few seconds, during which he seemed to listen intently; and then, as though he had some echo from above, which confirmed the hope that had been held out to him, he confidently added: "And I also shall go home,—and this very evening I shall be there."

While I was still pondering on these words, the old man had of his own accord quietly placed himself in the cart, and his companions had seated themselves by his side. They were on the point of driving off before the thought occurred to me of offering him money. I drew out my purse, half expecting him to refuse the proffered gift; and it was with a strong feeling of disappointment that I observed the look of satisfaction, almost amounting to eagerness, with which he took the silver from my hand.

I said within myself, "Can it be, then, that the taint of covetousness is to be found in a mind from which every earthly affection seems so entirely to have been withdrawn?"

The Money Kept For Him.

But I wronged him by the thought. The money was immediately taken from him, and he resigned it to another no less gladly than he had received it from me. "It will not do," said the keeper, "to let him have it himself: he will merely give it away to the first beggar he meets. He has not the slightest notion of the real value of money. It shall be laid out for his benefit; and till then it will be safe in my keeping."

My countenance may have expressed dissatisfaction at the change, though in truth I had no objection to make to it. But the old man himself interrupted me before I could reply, and said, "Do not be afraid, kind sir; whether it remain with me or him, your treasure will be safe, quite safe; it matters not now whether it remain with me or him;" and then added, in a more solemn tone, "safe 'where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.' I will take it home with me; and when you also go home, you will find it there."

And I now understood how it was for my sake that he had so gladly welcomed the gift; and I thought, too, that if in truth money had a real value at all, it must be the one which was assigned to it by him.

The men were in a hurry to depart, and I was now forced to bid adieu to the old man.

He appeared so sorry to leave me, that I promised on the morrow to come and see him. I did not like to use the word asylum, so I said at his dwelling-place. The expression at once caught his ear, and re-awakened the train of thought which my gift had interrupted for a time.

"Not in my dwelling-place," he said, "for to-morrow I shall not be there. If you see me again, kind stranger, it must be at home. May God bless you, and guide you on your way!" The cart was already in motion, but he looked back once more, and waved his hand as he said, "Good-bye, sir. Remember that we all are going home."

A Parting Warning.

They were the last words I heard him speak, and it is perhaps from that cause that they made so strong an impression on my mind; for often since then, when I have been tempted to wander from the right path, or to murmur as I walked along it, I have thought upon the old man's parting warning, and asked myself the question, "Am I not going home?"

Very early on the following morning I proceeded on foot to the town of N——. The scenery through which I passed was rich and beautiful, but it was lost upon me at the time: for there were busy thoughts within, which would not suffer my eye to rest on any external object. I was on my way to visit the old man, and had a presentiment, almost amounting to conviction, that I should not find him alive. The words, "I also shall go home, and this very evening I shall be there," in spite of myself, kept recurring to my mind.

It was to no purpose that I endeavored to set them aside, as part of the wanderings of a disordered intellect: there was a solemnity in the look and manner of the poor wanderer, which gave a reality to their meaning; and I believed the shadow of the future to have been resting on his spirit at the time he spoke them.

These fears gradually increased as I approached the Asylum. At the entrance there stood a little girl, weeping as though her heart would break. A woman, who appeared to be her mother, was trying in vain to comfort her. Her only reply to every caress was a fresh burst of sobs and tears. The scene was so in harmony with my own thoughts, that the very instant I saw her, I guessed the cause of her sorrow. Nor was my conjecture wrong: the child had dearly loved the old man, and wept because he was no more.

The father of this girl was the superintendent of the Asylum. He also was standing by, and offered to accompany me through the building. On the way, he proved very willing to gratify my curiosity concerning the stranger who had excited in me so singular an interest.

A Peculiar Delusion.

I soon found him to be an intelligent, kind-hearted man, who had entered instinctively into the thoughts and wishes of poor Robin, and yet had failed to appreciate what I may call the religion of his character. His daily familiarity with the varied forms of insanity may in part have been the cause. He had at once regarded him as a patient laboring under a peculiar kind of mental delusion, without looking beyond. In consequence of this, there was much in our conversation which grated harshly on my own feelings. I loved better to think of the old man, as I had first seen him, sitting in the midst of the picturesque scenery of the landslip, than confined within the gloomy walls of a pauper asylum.

The close rooms through which we passed, the dull tones of the superintendent's voice, his conviction of poor Robin's insanity, and even the compassionate interest with which he spoke of him, all interfered with the brightness of the image which my own mind had previously formed. It would have been more in harmony with my thoughts, to have heard from the child who was weeping for him, the simple narrative of the old man's life: but, perhaps, the contrast in the coloring of the picture only brings out the more strongly its intrinsic beauty; and for this reason I will still endeavor to trace it as it was first presented to my own view.

A Long Time in the Asylum.

The outline is soon drawn. Poor Robin had, for more than half a century, been an inmate of the asylum. No one could tell from whence he had been brought there, or say anything with certainty of his previous history.

It was, however, generally believed that he had known better days, but that some very heavy affliction had brought on mental derangement; and that, in consequence of this, his property had gradually gone to ruin, until at length he was consigned to a pauper asylum. He had been placed there under a very different system of treatment from that which now prevails.

It had even been thought necessary in the first instance to confine him with handcuffs and chains: and he would often struggle, in a paroxysm of passion, to set himself free. But after a few years, all the more violent symptoms of his disorder had entirely disappeared, and he became so quiet and resigned, that the physician had considered it safe to release him from his bonds, and suffer him to wander at large within the precincts of the asylum.

"There can be no doubt of the facts, sir," continued my guide, "for the marks on poor Robin's wrists prove him to have, at one time, undergone a very vigorous confinement; and yet, when I came here, I found that he had been long in the enjoyment of comparative freedom. But it is a case that always perplexes me, when I think of it; for the general effect of harsh treatment is to render the patient more violent and intractable than before; and I cannot understand from what cause the change in poor Robin's conduct could in the first instance have arisen."

Resigned to His Bondage.

"Do you not think," I asked, "that it may have been a sign of returning reason?" He smiled at the question, as he replied, "So far from it, sir, that it was accompanied by a new and extraordinary delusion, which never afterwards entirely left him. He fancied that the bonds which he felt and saw were merely imaginary, and that there were other invisible chains which were the real cause of his confinement. They say, that from the time this idea once gained possession of his mind, he made no further effort to recover his freedom, but even thanked the attendants for the care they were taking of him, and became as gentle and submissive as a child." Then I remembered the metaphor which the old man had employed when the marks on his wrist had attracted my attention; and I said within myself, that it was not indeed the return of reason, but a brighter and a far holier light, which had thus shone on the poor captive, and brought peace and resignation to his soul.

After his partial release, the manners and language of Robin had soon excited observation, and strengthened the belief that he must at one time have known better days. It was not, however, till the milder system of

treatment was introduced generally into the asylum, that the full beauty of his character had developed itself. Since that time, he had gradually won the affection of many of the patients, and had become an object of deep interest to all visitors. They had often come for the express purpose of talking with him.

What was Thought of Him.

"And," continued my conductor, "I often listened with wonder to the various interpretations they put upon his answers. Some would discover in them poetry; some, philosophy; some, religion; some, I know not what, according to the previous bias of their own minds." I inquired in what light he himself was disposed to view them? "As the wanderings of insanity," he replied; "for poor Robin was, undoubtedly, mad:" but presently added more thoughtfully, "yet there was something in his peculiar kind of madness which I could never exactly fathom."

I asked, whether no friend or relative had come to inquire after the old man, during the long period of his confinement? "No one," answered my conductor; "and so far it was a mercy that he had been deprived of his reason, since his madness prevented his being aware of his own solitary condition."

"How do you mean?" I said; "surely he could not help feeling that he was alone?"

"On the contrary," he replied, "he fully believed that he had a wife and children and home, and would speak, from day to day, of going to join them. Poor fellow! at one time, those who had the care of him would argue with him, and endeavor to explain to him that he was under a delusion. And the old man would soon get confused in his reasoning, and end by wringing his hands in an agony of grief.

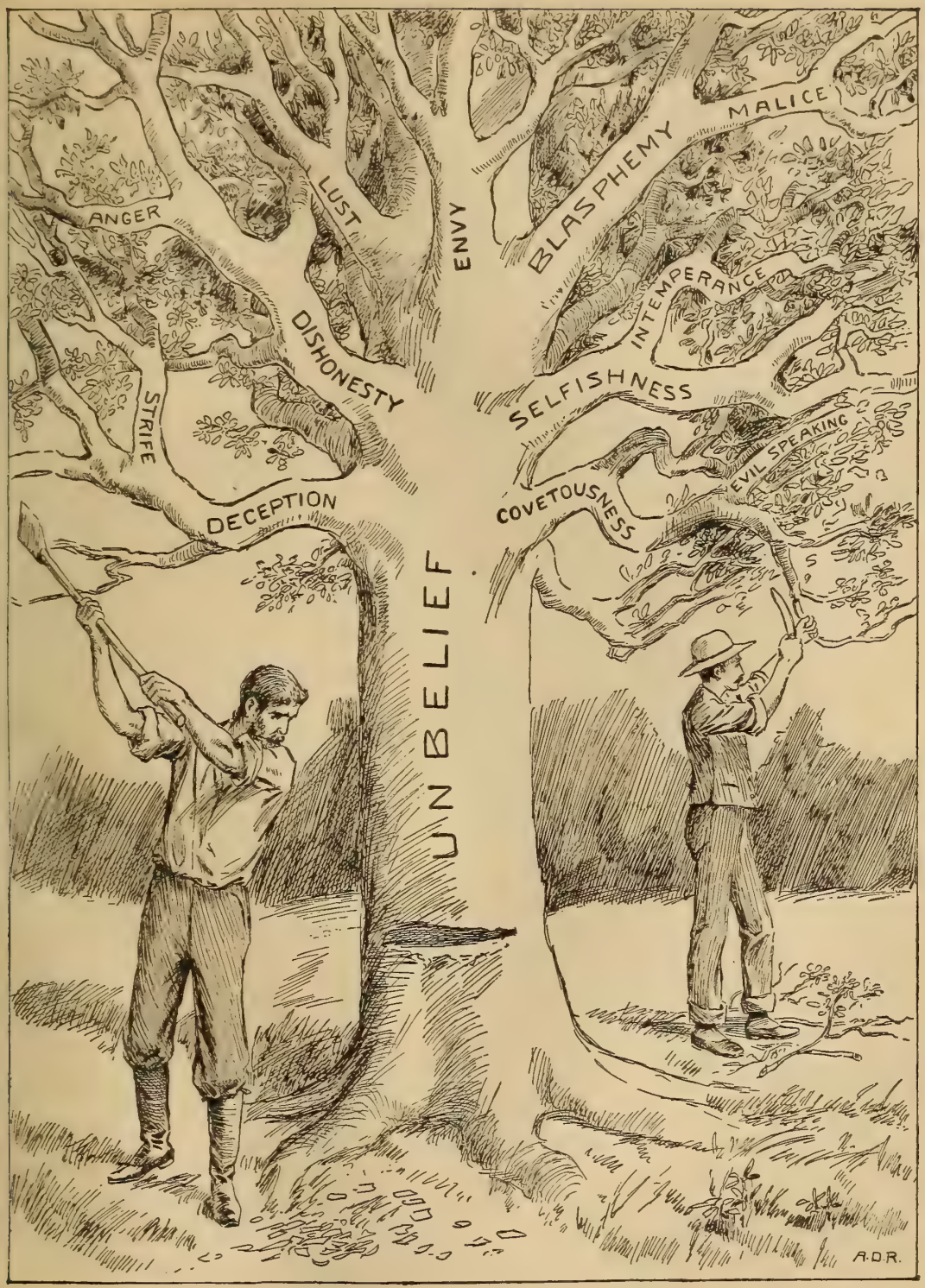
"But, since I have come here, I have thought it best to humor him in the belief; and not only forbidden all contradiction on this subject, but encouraged the attendants to talk to him about his home, and promise, that if he behaved well, he should go there very soon. You will hardly believe that I have seen tears of joy run down his cheeks at these simple words. Yet some have said that it was almost cruel to encourage a hope which must end in disappointment at last."

"But did it end in disappointment?" I said, following my own thoughts, rather than addressing my companion.

His Hope Grew Stronger.

He seemed struck by the remark, and, after a pause, replied, "Why, sir, one can hardly say that it did; for the hope seemed to grow stronger instead of weaker, as year after year passed by; and he continued in the same happy delusion to the very hour of his death. I have often thought that this imaginary home was a source of greater joy and comfort to him than the possession of any actual home could have been. When anything vexed or disturbed him he would say, that when at home he should feel it no more. When he felt dull and depressed, he would rouse himself by the thought, that he was going home. I myself have, at times, felt disposed to envy him his belief: and there was something very wonderful in the influence it gave him over his companions."

I inquired how this belief could influence others. "Because," said he, "Robin was unable to separate the present from the future; and so it was part of his confusion of ideas to believe that those with whom he lived here would live with him in his home also. It is the only instance I have known of a person under the influence of insanity being able to impart his own views to his companions.



VAIN TASK TO MERELY CLIP THE OUTER SHOOTS,
LET THE HUGE TRUNK BE SEVERED FROM THE ROOTS.

"But there seemed to be a kind of infection in the old man's madness; and more than one patient, who had previously been plunged in hopeless despondency, was gradually led to take interest in Robin's home. The effect has been so salutary with us, that I have often wished the same happy delusion could be introduced generally into other asylums."

Did Not Know His Poverty.

I was following the deep train of reflection awakened by this remark, and wondering how far it might indeed be possible to graft religion on the imagination, and so to soothe and cheer the dreams of insanity with the hope of heaven, when my conductor again resumed the conversation.

"There was, sir," he said, "another delusion of the old man's, scarcely less happy in its consequences than his belief about his home. You might have fancied that, from having once known better days, he would have felt bitterly the degradation of his new condition; but the whole time that he was in the Asylum he seemed utterly unconscious that he was dependent on the parish for support."

"Do you mean," I asked, "that he imagined something had been preserved from the wreck of his own property?"

"Not in the least," he replied; "he was fully aware that his own property was gone; but he believed his daily wants to be supplied by a kind of miracle, and would often observe that he had gone on for more than fifty years without making provision for the morrow, and yet had never known what it was to be without clothing or food. Of course, sir, I did everything in my power to encourage him in the belief; but one day I was greatly annoyed to find a visitor, who was not aware of the old man's peculiarities, endeavoring to explain to him that the parish was bound to find him support."

"And did he," I asked, "appear much hurt at the discovery?"

"Fortunately not, sir," he replied; "and this, I own, quite took me by surprise; for I greatly feared lest the consciousness of his dependence might destroy that feeling of self-respect, which, in all cases of insanity, it is so important to preserve. But Robin was rather pleased than vexed at the idea of the parish providing for him.

A Contented Spirit.

"Presently, however, he grew bewildered, and shook his head, and said that, after all, the parish could not provide for him beyond a single day, and that perhaps to-morrow he might be at home. The visitor was beginning to say something in reply: but Robin's home was with me sacred ground, and I would not suffer the argument to proceed farther."

Another pause of some minutes followed, until I broke it by inquiring whether the child whom I had observed at the entrance was related to the old man.

"Oh no, sir," he replied; "little Annie is my own daughter, and many persons have wondered that I suffered her to be so constantly with him. But I consider the society of children to be very beneficial to the insane; there is something in their ways and language which they can understand far better than our own; and this was peculiarly the case with poor Robin."

"And do you suppose," I said, "that the child liked to be with him?"

"Undoubtedly," he replied; "for the choice was her own. I merely encouraged it. But Robin had an inexhaustible stock of fairy tales, which made him a great favorite with children; and Annie would sit and listen to them for hours together."

"Do you really mean," I asked in some surprise, "that they were fairy tales?"

"Why, sir, for that matter," he answered, "poor Robin himself believed them to be true, and it was that which gave a peculiar interest to his manner of telling them. Some visitors have fancied them to be a kind of allegory: and I have often traced in the words a double meaning, of which the old man himself could hardly have been conscious. But, however this may have been, it is clear that they were connected with his particular mental delusion, from the way in which his imaginary home formed the prominent feature of every story."

Story of Annie.

I expressed a wish to hear one of them, and yet was hardly sorry when he confessed himself to be unable to comply with my request. He told me that he had only heard them in detached portions, for the patients in the Asylum were too numerous to allow him to devote as much time to poor Robin as he might otherwise have done.

"But, sir," he continued, "little Annie knows them all by heart, though I am afraid to-day she is feeling too deeply the loss of her companion to be able to repeat one. There certainly was something very singular in her fondness for the old man, and I have often been perplexed at the kind of influence he had over her. She herself was sometimes a sufferer from his delusions, and yet always fancied poor Robin must be in the right, and would submit to his wishes without a murmur or complaint. On one occasion, I myself felt called upon to interfere."

I begged him to relate the circumstance to which he referred.

"It was, sir," he said, "on Annie's ninth birthday, in November last. I had given her in the morning a new Victoria half-crown, and she went immediately to exhibit her treasure to her friend. She looked grave and thoughtful on her return; and, when I asked what purchases she had made with her present, she confessed that the old man had begged it of her, and she had given it him. The next day I told Robin how wrong he had been to take the poor child's money. But he answered, with his usual strangeness, that he did not in the least want it, and had asked for it because he loved little Annie, and wished to do her a kindness. Now, most people would have thought that this was rather a reason for giving her a present than for taking one away. And yet the old man spoke the truth, for he knew no better. It was one of his peculiarities to imagine that he was conferring a favor when he received one."

Loaned All His Possessions.

There was a passage from Holy Scripture which this answer suggested to my mind. I remembered "the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive,"[1] and I repeated it, rather to myself than to my companion. The words, however, caught his ear, and he observed that it was very likely I had hit upon the truth; for the understanding texts of Scripture in their literal meaning was one feature of poor Robin's insanity.

With a view to pursuing the subject further, I inquired whether the old man had restored the money.

"No, sir," replied my guide; "and this is the most provoking part of the story. I should not so much have minded if he had wished for it as a keepsake from the child; but he said he had lent it to some companion who had more need of it than himself."

[1] Acts xx. 35.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE reserved for a separate chapter that part of my conversation within the walls of the Asylum which led to a description of the closing scene in the old man's life. I was still reluctant to admit his insanity, for it seemed to me that he had only so fully realized the presence of the unseen world, as to have forgotten altogether the things of sight in the things of faith.

I inquired, therefore, of my companion, whether any more decided symptoms of madness had ever exhibited themselves than those which he had already mentioned. He appeared surprised at the question, but replied that, though the old man was always more or less under the influence of the disorder, there undoubtedly were certain periodic returns of it, and that these uniformly occurred at the commencement of spring.

"And did these," I asked, "render him for the time violent and intractable?"

"Oh no, sir," he answered; "ever since I have known him he has been the same quiet and inoffensive creature, and his madness used rather to assume a melancholy form. He became sad and dejected, and refused to eat, and would pass whole days together in his own solitary cell. On one occasion, my wife sent little Annie, in the hope that she might cheer him; but he would not even admit the child; he told her that his father was then with him, and that he would not talk to her. I went myself when I heard this; but, on opening the door, I found, as I expected, that he was alone."

"Perhaps," said I, "he may have meant that he was praying to his Father in Heaven."

"It is not unlikely," he replied; "for prayer was one way in which at these seasons his madness most frequently exhibited itself. I mean," he added, observing my look of surprise, "that he did not then pray like other people, but would often remain whole hours together upon his knees."

And I remembered how the prophetess Anna was said to have served God with fastings and prayers night and day, and how our blessed Lord Himself had continued a whole night in prayer to God; but I made no further reply.

"The doctor," resumed my conductor, "considered the long solitude to be so bad for him, that for the last few days he had not suffered him to remain in his cell. It was, perhaps, this circumstance which turned the current of his thoughts into another channel, and led to his wandering from the Asylum."

He Started for Home.

I was not sorry to change the conversation, by inquiring how he had contrived his escape.

"Nay," he replied, "it is hardly fair to speak of it as an escape. We were never very strict with the old man, and often suffered him to go beyond the boundaries. On the present occasion, he had made no secret of his intention, and told one of the attendants that he was anxious to pay his wife and children a visit, and should soon be back. I have no doubt myself that he intended to keep his word; but he probably started, in the first instance, in a wrong direction, and so lost his way."

"What do you mean," I asked, "by his starting in a wrong direction? I thought you were ignorant from what part of the island he had been brought here."

"True, sir," he replied; "but Robin himself always fancied that his home lay toward the east: the little window of the cell he occupied looked in that direction; and though it was too cold for him in the winter months, we never could persuade him to change it for one with a southern aspect. He always said that he did not feel the cold, as long as he could see his home. Now, there is nothing but a small hamlet visible from the window, and, of course, when the old man did not return, I sent to it to inquire after him."

A Stream of Light.

"And had he been there?" I said.

"No, sir," he replied; "and, after wasting many hours in the search, we at length heard that he had been seen walking along the road which led direct to the Undercliff. It was this circumstance which enabled him to get so many miles from the Asylum before he was overtaken. But, as I said, I do not think that he intentionally misled us, but only missed his way."

Now I knew full well that the village of B—— was not the home of which the old man had spoken; but, when I remembered the agony with which he had implored to be allowed to proceed thither, I could not believe that mere accident was the cause of his journey. I resolved to return thither to prosecute my inquiries; but, before I left the Asylum, asked to see the room which poor Robin had occupied.

"This is it, sir," said my conductor, as he threw open the door of a low narrow cell. "You will find it smaller and more comfortless than many others, but it is the one in which he was placed when he was first brought here; and he had become so fond of his little window, and the view towards the east, that it would have been a mistaken kindness to force him to change it."

I scarcely heard the words of apology, for I felt a sudden thrill as I found myself ushered thus unexpectedly into the chamber of death. The old man was lying upon his narrow bed, and a stream of light through the open window fell upon his tranquil countenance. A single glance was sufficient to tell me not only that he was indeed dead, but that his end had been full of peace. There was no convulsion of the features, and the first symptoms of decay had not yet appeared. His eyes had been left unclosed, but the wandering light was no longer there, and the smile which from time to time had been wont to play across his lips, rested quietly upon them now. The one idea that his look and posture alike conveyed to the mind was that of perfect tranquillity and repose. I felt that his long journey had at length been finished, and that the old man was at rest in his home.

The Last Sleep.

My companion also seemed for a while absorbed in thought. He advanced softly to the bedside, and it was not until, with a gentle hand, he had closed the old man's eyes, that he broke the silence by observing, "Ah, sir, morning after morning I have found him lying thus, and gazing through the open window. His sight was gradually becoming very weak from the glare of light, but he was unconscious of it himself. And it was but yesterday he told me that in a little while he should be no longer dazzled by the brightness of his home. Poor fellow! when I came into the room a few hours since, and saw his eyes so calm and motionless, though

the full rays of the sun were falling upon them, I knew that he must be dead, and could not help thinking how singularly his words had come true."

There was something in the tone of voice in which this description was given, that proved the speaker to have some secret feeling of its allegorical meaning, though he himself would probably have been unable to define it.

A Bible and Prayer-Book were lying on the table by the bedside. I turned to the fly-leaf of the former, in the hope that I might at least gather from it the poor wanderer's name. There was written in it, "Susan Wakeling." I conjectured that the sacred volume must formerly have been his own wedding present to his bride. I replaced it on the table, and it opened of its own accord at the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The page was much worn, as though it had not only been often read, but many tears had fallen upon it.

Seeking a Country.

My eye quickly rested on the passage, "These all died in faith; . . . . and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And, truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." [1] And while I read, it seemed as though I had found the text to the old man's history.

Another smaller volume was near them. My conductor told me that it was the gift of the chaplain. I inquired whether the chaplain used to come often to see him. "Very frequently," was the reply. "He took great interest in poor Robin, and the old man was grateful for it. It certainly was singular," he added, thoughtfully, "that on his return yesterday evening, he should have expressed so earnest a wish that the chaplain should be sent for."

"And did you refuse?" I asked.

"Fortunately not, sir," he replied. "I hesitated at first, for it was very late, and poor Robin was evidently much exhausted with the fatigue and excitement of the day. But he became so anxious about it, that my wife interceded for him, and told me she thought he would go to sleep more quietly after he had been here. I well remember now the peculiar emphasis with which the old man repeated her words, and said, 'Yes, yes, I shall doubtless go to sleep more quietly after he has been here.' It almost seemed as though he felt his end to be near at hand."

I begged to know what passed at his interview with the chaplain. My companion, however, could give me no information as to the first part of it, for the old man had desired to be left alone with him, and his wish had been at once indulged.

The Burden Gone.

"But," he continued, "on our return to the room, we found him looking more light and cheerful than we had ever before seen him; and when I congratulated him, he said that it was no wonder, for a very heavy burthen had been taken away.

"My wife stayed for some time watching by his bedside. He remained perfectly still and silent, though his eyes were open. At length she asked him whether he did not feel tired, and wished to go to sleep? And she tells me, that he smiled like a little infant, as he replied, 'O no, not at all tired; for all that wearied me has been taken away.' And

[1] Hebrews xi. 13-15.

THE SLAVE OF HABIT BREAKS HIS GALLING CHAINS,
AND THROUGH ALL-CONQUERING GRACE HIS FREEDOM GAINS.

then, after a pause, he added, 'But you may wish me good-night now for I shall be asleep very soon;—and tell dear Annie I am going home.' He spoke in so cheerful a tone that my wife little thought they were his last words, and she left him, as she fancied, to repose. But it was a sleep from which he never woke again."

"Ah, sir," he continued, "it seems a sad thing to die thus forsaken and alone; and yet, after all, many who have kind friends and relatives round their sick-beds might envy poor Robin his peaceful end. He went off so quietly at last, that those who slept in the room adjoining were not disturbed during the night by the slightest sound. But early this morning, when I came to inquire after him, he was lying just as you now see him, quite dead!"

Released from Prison.

The deep feeling with which these words were pronounced, convinced me that he was no less touched than myself by the contemplation of the outward tranquility of the old man's death. But who can realize the inward peace that must have been there, when the body fell asleep, and the soul was released from its long imprisonment, and carried by angels on its homeward journey!

As we left the old man's room, I inquired whether there were many besides little Annie who mourned his loss. A smile again crossed the features of my companion, as he replied:

"There were many of the patients who loved him almost as dearly as the child herself, but I can scarcely speak of them as mourners now. A report spread among them this morning that Robin was going home; I cannot tell from what quarter it arose, but when I came to them, they crowded round me to know if it were true."

"And did you," I asked, "then tell them that he was dead?"

"Not in so many words," he replied. "I merely said that he was already gone home, and that they must not expect to see him here again. And more than one voice exclaimed in reply, 'Happy, happy Robin, to be taken home!'"

Still I observed that I had remarked on the countenance of many of the patients an expression of sadness.

"True," he answered, "for with them the transition of feeling from joy to grief is very rapid. They are not, however, sorrowing for poor Robin, but for themselves, because they have not been allowed to accompany him. There were some, in the first instance, who were very loud in their complaints; but I soothed them by saying that it was right the old man should go first, because he had been here so long."

Mourning for Robin.

After a pause, he continued: "It is my own wish, as well as the chaplain's, that many of them should attend the funeral, for I would gladly pay this tribute of respect to Robin's memory. And yet I am half reluctant to give way to it: the remembrance of the scene might afterwards throw some gloom over the bright and happy notions which they have now formed of his home."

I replied that it might be so; and as I said this, I could not help feeling that the scene after the old man's death had been in perfect harmony with his life, and that poor Robin was rightly rejoiced over and rightly mourned.

My account of my visit to the Asylum has already far exceeded the limits which I had assigned it. And yet, at the risk of being wearisome, I cannot refrain from adding one more fragment from my conversation within

its walls, before I proceed to the more pleasant task that lies beyond. With a view to prosecuting my inquiries in the village of B——, I asked my companion whether Robin had ever dropped a hint of his former calling.

"Oh yes, sir," was the reply; "he used to say that he had enlisted as a soldier very early in life, and had at one time been made a prisoner. I have seen the tears run down little Annie's cheeks at the piteous tale he would tell of the way in which his enemies had bound him hand and foot, and cast him into a dark and terrible dungeon, from which he had hardly escaped with his life. But I believe the whole story to be imaginary, and it is one that I have little difficulty in accounting for. He doubtless referred to the hardships he endured at the period of his first imprisonment in the Asylum. No one can wonder that they should have taken so strong a hold on his imagination."

Feared a Secret Enemy.

"Did he, then," I asked, "believe that his warfare had long been at an end?"

"No, sir," he replied. "And perhaps it would be more correct to say that the treatment to which he had been exposed was the origin of his delusion, than that it accounted for it. The idea that he was liable to the attacks of some secret enemy seems from that time to have taken a fixed possession of his brain; and if any one assured him that he never could be subjected to the same ill-usage again, his invariable answer was, that there was no safety for him except at home. And then he would maintain that having once enlisted, he could never cease to be a soldier, and talk of treacherous foes and long watchings and doubtful conflicts. You would have imagined him, from his conversation, to have been one who was fighting and struggling all day long, instead of the quiet, inoffensive character that he really was. But this, sir, was not all; he would fancy that every one else was a soldier also. He almost persuaded little Annie that she had enlisted in the same army with himself; and often made her sad by talking of the enemies who surrounded her, and the service she was required to perform."

The Valiant Soldier.

I here interrupted him by asking whether the child had not been baptized. He at once perceived the drift of the question, and replied, "I know what you mean, sir,—she was then made the soldier and servant of Christ."

"Yes," I added, "and entered into a solemn engagement to fight manfully under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil."

"True," he answered; "and it is very curious that it was the old man himself who first pointed out that passage to me. I remember it struck me at the time that his peculiar notions about soldiers might, in some way, be connected with it. And I think it far from improbable; for Robin's madness seemed principally to consist in his regarding metaphors as realities, and realities as metaphors. The difference between him and ourselves would be, that he believed little Annie to be really a soldier, and not merely to be called one in the Bible."

I made no further reply, for my own thoughts grew perplexed, as I tried to determine with myself what were truth and realities, and what merely shadows and metaphors, of the things pertaining to our present existence.

The recollection of little Annie has made me wander from my story, and I must now hasten to bring it to a conclusion. I left the

Asylum, pondering deeply on the things I had heard and seen. My heart was sad within me; for I could not help giving way to a feeling of compassionate sorrow as I thought of the old man's solitary lot.

His past history seemed, indeed, to be lost in almost hopeless oblivion. But I knew that he must have been crushed and broken down by some terrible calamity in early youth; that he had been awakened from the stupor which it produced to the stern reality of bonds and chains, and then been doomed to a dull unvaried captivity, not for days, weeks, or months, but for a long period of more than fifty years.

A Gloomy Picture.

Thus Reason kept drawing a melancholy picture of one without home, without friends, dependent on charity for his daily bread, whose whole existence was a dreary void, with no employment to beguile his thoughts, no hope to cheer him on his way. It needed only the recollection of that peculiar solitude of mind, which is almost the certain offspring of insanity, to complete its gloom.

And yet, after all, it was my own infirmity which made me sad; for, when I had strength to gaze on the same picture with the eye of faith, bright and beautiful were the images that I saw.

I then perceived that he was not without home, for his home was in the land of spirits beyond the grave; he was not without friends, for his wife and children were waiting for him there; while he remained upon earth, he was not dependent, for he felt his daily wants to be supplied by a Father's care; he never, for a single instant, was without occupation, for he had a long warfare to accomplish, a distant journey to perform; and still less was he uncheered by the blessing of hope, for he was able to rest in humble trust on his Saviour's promise, and go on, day after day, laying up treasures for himself, which neither moth nor rust could corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

Out of the loneliness caused by his affliction he had created a new world for himself, or rather, he had been drawn by it to live in that world which, though unseen, God has really created for us all. And surely to him life could never have been dull and unvaried, while he was able to trace the types and emblems of spiritual things alike in the passing gleams of sunshine and in the dark shadows that rested upon his path!

Was he Insane?

Mingled with these conflicting emotions, the question from time to time arose in my mind, "And was poor Robin really mad?" And again it was only my own infirmity which caused me to shrink from the reply. It is hard indeed to define madness; and the state of his intellect probably varied from time to time. Thus it may have been almost without a cloud when little Annie was his companion.

So also, during my brief interview with him, the stillness of the evening, and the unison of his own thoughts with the surrounding scene, may have breathed a soothing influence upon his mind. And yet when I reflected calmly on that very interview, I felt that they were right in not suffering the old man to travel alone along the journey of life.

His was the second childhood; simple, pure, and holy as the first, and yet, in his case, no less than the first, requiring a protector's care. He spoke and thought as a child, and children could understand him; but the calm mirror of his mind quickly grew troubled in his intercourse with men, and he then lost the power of explaining his

FRESH FLOWERS BLOOM AND LIMPID FOUNTAINS PLAY
TO CHEER THE TRAVELLERS ON THEIR UPWARD WAY.

thoughts, or perhaps of himself distinguishing between the shadow and the substance, the things of sight and the things of faith. Reason had resigned her sway during the mental conflict which had been caused by his calamites; and though peace and quietness had been restored, she never had attained sufficient vigor to resume it again.

Weakness and Strength.

Nay, more; it may be that her lamp was the more dim and uncertain, on account of the brighter and clearer light which from that time burned unceasingly in his soul. It is possible that he was slow in observing the different shades of color that passed across earthly objects, because to his eye one unfading color was resting upon them all; and that his mere intellectual faculties remained weak and palsied, because out of this very weakness he had been made strong, and he was at all times conscious of the presence of a surer support and safer guide.

And what matters it, if it were so? Why may we not revere poor Robin, and love him, and learn from him, and yet not shrink from acknowledging that his reason had gone astray? Surely, there is no one who would not gladly leave the hard dull road of life, if only they could wander with him along the same bright and happy paths! There is no one who would not give the choicest gifts of reason twice told, if only they could purchase for them the childlike faith of a simple-hearted man.

I was half sorry when my arrival at the village of B—— made me change these silent meditations for the attempt to investigate the old man's connections and history. It was not, however, mere curiosity that prompted me to do so. I was anxious, if it were possible, to save him from a pauper's grave.

For a long time my inquiries were in vain. Some few, indeed, had heard of poor Robin; for his fame, as I have said, had spread beyond the walls of the asylum; but the name of Wakeling was unknown to them; and they did not believe he had ever been connected with the parish of B——. They referred me, however, to the cottage of the oldest inhabitant of the village. She was a widow, of very great age, having lived to see four generations around her. A few years since, they said she was able to speak distinctly of events that had happened more than half a century ago, but latterly her memory had become impaired.

When I mentioned to her the name of Wakeling, the word at once awakened some recollection of the past. She twice repeated it, and added, almost mechanically, "Good and excellent people, sir, and very kind to the poor." But when I questioned her as to their occupation and history, and asked what had become of them, she shook her head, as though the thread of memory had been broken off, and she was unable to unite it again.

As a last hope, I referred directly to the spring of 18— and inquired whether it had been marked by any particular occurrence. "Ah, sir," she replied, "much of the past is now like a dream to me, but that is a period which I never can forget."

Death by the Plague.

The tone of sadness in which these words were uttered, proved some deep sorrow to be connected with the remembrance of it; and on further questioning, I learnt that it was a season in which an infectious fever had raged in the village, and that whole families had been carried off by its ravages; she herself had been left an orphan. But though her recollection of the illness itself seemed as

vivid as though it had occurred but yesterday, of the Wakelings she could say nothing with distinctness. It may be that her mind was too absorbed with the remembrance of her own grief to allow her to recur to that of others; or it may be that, even at the time, in the general affliction the loss of an individual, however grievous, had been scarcely noticed, and soon forgotten. At length she seemed to grow weary of my importunity, and said, "I cannot tell who may have lived, and who may have died; you must go, sir, to the churchyard, and there you will find the only certain history of that fatal spring."

A new thought was suggested by these words, and I repaired thither in the hope that I might find that information, which I had sought in vain from the living, among the silent records of the dead.

The evening was now drawing on, and it was in truth the very hour at which but yesterday I had parted from the old man. I was alone; and as I trod, with a cautious reverence, upon the green sod, there was no sound to break the tranquility of the scene, save the ripple of the waters at the edge of the cliff on which the churchyard stood.

Their restless motion only made me feel the more deeply the stillness of the hallowed ground itself; and I thought, that if the old man had been with me, he might have found in it an apt emblem of the quiet resting-place of the dead, lying on the very borders of the sea of life, and yet untroubled by its murmuring, and sheltered from its storms.

I was not long in discovering the object which I sought. The rays of the setting sun at once directed me to a stone at the eastern extremity of the churchyard. It was distinguished from those around by a simple cross; but in spite of the soft light that was now shed upon it, it was with difficulty that I deciphered the inscription which it bore. For not only was the tomb itself thickly covered with moss and weeds, but my own eye grew dim with tears, as one by one the few sad words revealed to me the secret of the old man's history. His restlessness during the spring, the object of his last solitary journey, and parts of his conversation with myself, which before had seemed obscure, was now fully explained. The inscription was a simple record that the old man was indeed united at last, in body as well as spirit, to those whom he had so dearly loved and mourned so long.

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